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# JESUS IS WAITING

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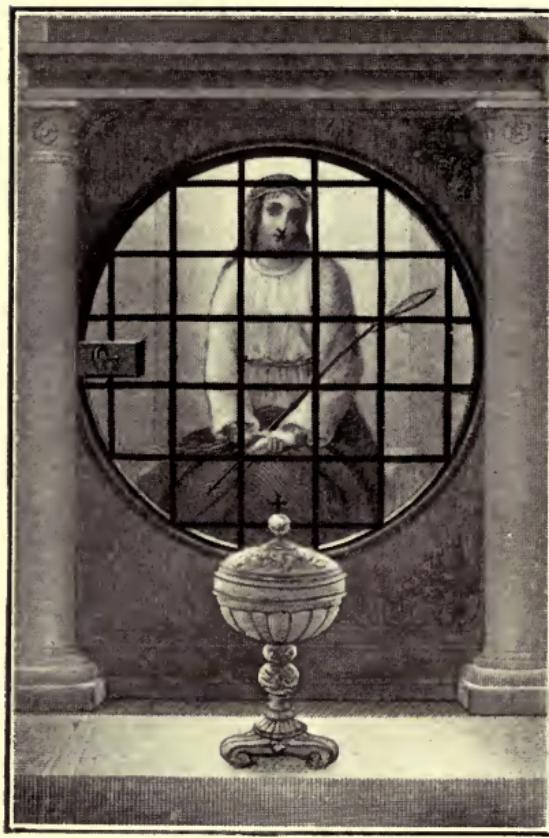
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JESUIT  
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A Prisoner of love for thee,  
Before My Father I weep and pray.  
For all thy sin and misery  
Myself I offer night and day.

# Jesus is Waiting

Appeals and Reproaches from the  
Prisoner of Love

By

Matthew Russell, S.J.

Author of "Communion Day," "Vespers and Compline"

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TO

THE HOLY AND AMIABLE MEMORY

OF

*Sister Mary Francis of the Blessed Sacrament*

*(The Hon. Mrs. O'Hagan)*

WHO GAVE UP A WORLD IN WHICH SHE WAS LOVED  
AND ADMIRED, FOR A HIDDEN LIFE OF EXPIATION  
AND PERPETUAL ADORATION WHICH ENDED HAPPILY

ON THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER 1909



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## JESUS IS WAITING

JESUS is waiting. This is not an inspired text of Sacred Scripture, but only a sort of catchword, watchword, mnemonic, for which I am going to crave a lodging in your heart, dear reader, in the hope that it may sometimes waken holy echoes there.

The phrase, *Jesus is waiting*, calls up before the mind two distinct pictures, both of which have been set before the eye also by painter or engraver. Upon one of these pictures might be inscribed these words that occur near the end of the third chapter of the Apocalypse, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"—warning words which the Son of Man bade St. John write to the bishop of the Church of Laodicea, just after that denunciation of his lukewarmness, which is one of the most common as well as the most frightening of scriptural quotations. Under the other picture

## 2      Jesus is Waiting

might be written the reproach which our Saviour has told us He will address to the reprobate when he becomes our Judge: “I was in prison, and ye did not visit Me.”

A modern painter, the most religious that Protestant England has produced—Holman Hunt—has tried to realise the first of these conceptions in a picture which through engravings is familiar to many of us who have never seen the original canvas.<sup>1</sup> It is called “The Light of the World,” and it represents Jesus Christ standing outside a closed door and waiting patiently. The other idea is made visible, as it were, and palpable in a little engraving called “The Prisoner of Love,” in which our Blessed Lord is depicted as a captive behind the prison-bars of the tabernacle. Let us fix our gaze for a little on these two pictures, one after the other.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” What door is this? The door of our hearts; and it is Jesus who seeks an entrance there. *Jesus is waiting.*

<sup>1</sup> Now at Keble College, Oxford. The other picture is our frontispiece.

## Jesus is Waiting      3

Have we kept Him waiting long? An interval that is not really long will seem long in such circumstances. Five minutes on the doorstep appear longer than half-an-hour in the parlour or dining-room. I know a man—*scio hominem*—who, when he adverts to the fact that his delay outside a hall-door has been unduly prolonged, begins at once to say very slowly three Hail Marys, and, if the third Hail Mary at furthest is not interrupted by any sign of life within, he turns on his heel and departs in peace. Yes, we have all found sometimes that a very few moments will seem very tedious when we have knocked, and perhaps knocked a second time, and the door remains closed against us, and no sound of approaching footsteps is heard from within, and there we are, still left standing outside, perhaps in the cold wind and rain. But how much worse it would be if the visitor had given notice of his coming, and knew that his friend was at home at the time and that admittance was purposely refused to him through unkindness, through unwillingness to see

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him, through a stern resolve not to grant the favour that the visitor had come to seek?

“These things are said for a parable” (Gal. iv. 24). Alas! how often is this picture realised in the history of God’s dealings with the souls of men! How often has it been realised in God’s dealings with *us*! “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” *Jesus is waiting.* How patiently He has waited, and how long! In all the hours and days that the clocks and watches of the universe have measured, minute by minute, since that undefined moment long ago which first found our minds developed enough to understand right and wrong, to know God’s rights and dictates of conscience, to be capable of sin—every hour since that long-past hour Jesus has stood at the door and knocked; God has spoken to our hearts interiorly by the impulses of His grace, and externally through various influences and instruments. Have we opened at the first knock? Have we not rather tried not to hear, pretended not to hear, the call of God, no matter how clear and loud it rang in our

## Jesus is Waiting 5

hearts, instead of listening eagerly to catch the faintest whisper of the Divine Voice? "To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Ps. xciv. 8).

For us, however, as we kneel before the altar, it is more natural to give the other meaning to the little spiritual mnemonic that is guiding our thoughts ; it is easier to picture Jesus to ourselves appealing to us from within rather than as seeking admission from without. Here indeed in the tabernacle *Jesus is waiting*—waiting to be visited by us, waiting to receive us, waiting to do us good. He will not keep us out in the cold, when we come. "Knock, and it shall be opened to you."

Let us rise from human things to divine things by trying to bring home to ourselves the sense of ingratitude and guilt and shame which we should surely feel if we ever dared to treat any of our fellow-creatures, our human friends, as we have too often treated our Divine Friend, our Saviour, our Lord, and our God. If we cannot be angry enough with ourselves, we can at least feel

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a generous indignation against others when they are guilty of such ingratitude towards mother or sister or wife: for it is from only such as these that we can expect the patient love which is strong enough to survive years of selfish indulgence and heartless folly and cruel neglect. Mother or wife or sister waiting alone at home, far into the night, waiting for the son or husband or brother, spendthrift perhaps and profligate, who is brute enough to take what he calls his pleasure at the expense of the pain and anguish of those whom he is bound to love—heroic patience, sublime forbearance, are exercised in circumstances like these, day after day, night after night, in many a humble home which for the sake of such virtues is dearer to God than palace or senate-house. Again, “these things are said for a parable.” These lonely watchers might well seek their strength in the thought of the patient vigils kept by our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament where “He sleeps while His Heart is watching.” As we cannot but feel sympathy and pity for the poor woman who has to

keep watch through the lonely, comfortless hours that were meant for holy sleep, waiting for the too often worthless creature on whom such wealth of affection is wasted: so let us excite in our hearts some such compassion for the Divine Prisoner of Love who, out of love of His ungrateful creatures, is waiting night and day in the most adorable Sacrament of the Altar, waiting for visits that are not paid, for prayers and petitions that are not offered, for love that is not felt, alas! or at least not shown.

I do not know who it was that first bestowed upon our Lord thus waiting for us in the tabernacle the suggestive title of the Prisoner of Love. The Redemptorist lay-brother lately canonised, St. Gerard Majella, seems to have used it from his twelfth year out of his own devotion; and in Father Magnier's short sketch of his life the expression "Prisoner of Love" is purposely repeated six or seven times. But probably this pathetic name had occurred to many another before him: for Jesus, abiding constantly on our altars at the disposal of and for the

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service of His poor, sinful creatures, may surely be called a prisoner ; and what can hold Him imprisoned there except His love for us ? Who can His jailer be but only Love ?

This is the character under which our Blessed Saviour is set before our eyes in the little engraving which I described at the beginning, and of which I once attempted a fuller interpretation in this form :—

A holy picture bears this name, *The Prisoner of Love.*

'Tis Thou who reignest, mighty God ! in majesty above,  
Yet hidest in this lowly shrine, Love's Captive, for my sake.

Sweet Jesus, may my heart its home within Thy prison make ?

Let not my cold and selfish heart earn this reproach from Thee :

"I was in prison once, and thou—thou didst not visit Me."

Lord, Thou art here for my love's sake, and I am here for Thine :

Make me Thine own, and, as Thou wilt, dispose of me and mine.

I too a prisoner of love will here in peace abide  
Until Thy welcome Messenger shall call me to Thy side.

(God's Messenger is Death. May he

## Jesus is Waiting

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be a welcome messenger for each of us when he comes! May we be able to receive him with "a hundred thousand welcomes," the *cead mile failte* of fervent Irish hearts! And meanwhile, to finish the very simple lines that I am quoting, let us say to our Lord :)

I place in trust within Thy Heart, than mother's heart  
more fond,  
My past, my future, life and death, and all that waits  
beyond.  
These fleeting hours lead quickly on to the Eternal  
Years :  
May each be filled with faith and love, meek prayers  
and holy tears.  
And while I linger like caged bird that pines to soar  
above,  
Captive Divine ! oh, keep me here the captive of Thy  
love.

Yes, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is indeed the Prisoner of Love ; and this Divine Captive must make us in return the willing captives of His love. Of old it was prophesied of the future Redeemer, and St. Paul, writing to the Christians of Ephesus (Ephs. iv. 8), repeats the word of the Psalmist after the prophecy had been fulfilled in the glorious mystery of the Ascension : " Ascending on high, Thou hast led

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captivity captive." Not only ascending but descending, not only ascending on high but descending to this low estate, coming down from His heavenly throne to this prison-house of love, to the narrow prison-cell of the ciborium, our Eucharistic Lord leads captivity captive, bringing those who were or might have been the miserable slaves of earthly vanities and sin—bringing them under the blissful bondage of His grace, making them also "prisoners of love."

May Jesus our Lord and our God bind us fast with these fetters of love, that so we may never be parted from Him either in life or in death! May we live and die under the shadow of His sacramental presence on earth, and may we live for ever in the brightness of the Beatific Vision in heaven! But between earth and heaven stands the judgment-seat of God. There, too, *Jesus is waiting*. May we now, while there is still time, in these passing days of our mortal life, prepare for the judgment; and amongst our preparations may we, by the frequency and fervour of our visits to the Blessed Sacrament,

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entitle ourselves to cherish the glorious hope of hearing from the lips of our merciful Redeemer and Judge the welcome which He Himself has put into words that for us can be literally fulfilled only in the Sacrament of His love: "I was in prison, and ye visited Me. Ye blessed of My Father, come!"

## JESUS AT THE WELL

“JESUS, being weary with His journey, sat beside the well.” These few words, from the fourth chapter of St. John’s Gospel, call up before our minds a very beautiful and instructive incident in the life of our Divine Redeemer. He was travelling from Judea into Galilee—travelling as a poor man, on foot, without any comfort or appliances of travel. Of the two routes open to Him, He had chosen the one that led through Samaria ; and no doubt He had chosen it, not merely because it was the shortest and most direct, but at least partly in order that, when weary with His journey, He might sit thus by the well of Jacob and might do the work that He accomplished here before He passed on.

The well was at a little distance from the town of Sichar ; and there He rested while He sent the Apostles on to the town to procure food for themselves and

Him. He needed food and rest, just as *they* did, just as *we* should have done if we had toiled on for many hours on a dusty road under a broiling sun, for He was true man, like one of us, subject to all human hardships and infirmities ; free only from sin, incapable of sin, but in all else “behold ! Adam (the heavenly Adam) is become as one of us” (Gen. iii. 22). For thus the Son of Man reversed the impious ambition of the first man, the father of the fallen human race.

And so Jesus sat down by the well, and waited. But for what was He waiting ? For the return of His Apostles. Yes, but first of all and more anxiously for the coming of one whom He intends to make an apostle to draw the people of Sichar into His fold. Who shall this apostle be ? Not one of the great and wealthy men of the town, with a wide influence over his fellow-citizens—not a man pious and learned in whatever religion they professed there. No such person, but a woman who was looked down upon by all with scorn, who was indeed living in sin. This Samaritan

## 14 Jesus at the Well

woman is poor. She has no servant to carry water for her, but comes out herself with her pitcher from the city to draw water from Jacob's Well ; and she finds seated there a stranger, who says to her, "Give Me to drink."

That first word and all the words that passed between our Saviour and the Samaritan woman might be profitably meditated upon for hours ; but let us now see rather in our Divine Lord, as He sat there beside the well about the sixth hour on that day, nearly nineteen hundred years ago—let us see in Him an image of Jesus Himself, such as He has been ever since and such as He is to-day, in that Eucharistic mystery of His love which goes on for ever.

What was Jesus doing as He sat there by the well ? He was waiting. And Jesus is waiting still. That wistful longing for the poor, sinful human heart, which filled the Heart of Jesus on that afternoon so long ago, fills the Heart of Jesus still at this moment as He reigns in heaven and as He dwells upon our altars. He yearns to possess our hearts. It is for this purpose that

He dwells there, so near to us, within our reach. It is for this purpose that He makes His home in every tabernacle before which a sentinel lamp is burning as a sign that He is *there*—there not only by virtue of His Divinity as the infinite, eternal, omnipotent, and omnipresent God, but really present also in His sacred humanity, with His human heart, His human feelings, His human tenderness as our Incarnate Lord.

We cannot too vividly realise to ourselves or too constantly keep before our minds this overwhelming fact, this most amiable but most awful of the dogmas of our faith. Not without reason did a venerable priest, who some fifty years ago was called the Blind Apostle of Paris, Monsieur Gaston de Ségur—not without reason did this holy man write: “For all whom I love I wish only one thing, for this includes everything—a very earnest, a very vivid, a very loving faith in the God of the Eucharist, Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, the Wheat of the Elect, the source of all holiness, of all strength, of all happy-

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ness, of all love." We, too, can desire no greater grace than this for those whom we love; and, as we are bound to love ourselves with a true, enlightened love, this is the grace of graces that we must desire for ourselves also. Thus shall we gratify that yearning of the Heart of Jesus for our poor human hearts; thus shall we yield to the entreaty which He addresses to us, as He addressed it to the poor Samaritan woman for whom He waited at the well, "Give Me to drink."

What was this thirst that He suffered? He felt a natural, corporal thirst, no doubt, as He did when He cried out afterwards on the Cross, "I thirst"; but still more upon the Cross, and nearly three years earlier here beside the well of Sichar, He felt a supernatural and spiritual thirst, a thirst for the souls of men. And this thirst consumes Him still. An ancient Father and Doctor of the Church, St. Gregory Nazianzen, says that God "thirsts to be thirsted for." Let us strive to slake that divine thirst by thirsting for God in return. Let us "hunger and thirst after justice,"

after the Sun of Justice, after the Just One. Let us thirst for God, for His love, for His grace, for His glory.

But, alas! we feel no such burning thirst. We are too likely to be distressed till the end at the hardness of our hearts, at our coldness and insensibility with regard to all the manifestations of God's love, and especially with regard to this great Sacrament of His love. It may help us a little towards feeling and acting as our faith would prompt us to feel and act when we see the estimate of our faith and practice that is formed by candid and gifted men outside the Church, who unfortunately do not share our faith, but look on with calm curiosity from a distance.

A Protestant writer in a secular journal, the brilliant musical critic, Mr. John F. Runciman, discussing in the *Saturday Review* the proper use of music to form a part of public worship —on which his views are in harmony with the recent legislation of Pius the Tenth—excused somewhat contemptuously the unworthy character of the music commonly heard in Protestant

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churches, on the ground, seemingly, that such places of worship were little more sacred than theatres. But he sternly rebuked Catholics for tolerating anything but truly sacred music during the sacrifice of the altar and other sacred rites. "The Catholic has no such excuse. Here is, for him, the very presence of his Creator; the Almighty before whom he must stand to be judged on the last awful day. If ever there was an hour to be serious, the hour of Mass is that one."

A more important witness from without is Mr. Augustine Birrell, who contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* (April 1896) a remarkable article headed by the question, "What, then, did happen at the Reformation?" He laughs to scorn the silly pretensions of some Protestants that there was no break in the continuity of the Anglican Church, that *they* are the same church as the church of St. Anselm and St. Thomas à Becket. He urges vehemently that the Eucharistic sacrifice was abolished by Protestantism, and that this change was fundamental and cut off the Elizabethan church from

all that had gone before—that Catholics only are the representatives of those who built the glorious cathedrals of Catholic England. “There is,” he says, “much that is touching and forlorn in the spectacle of the English Roman Catholic no longer able to adore his Risen Lord in any one of those stately mother-churches built by the piety and still instinct with the genius of his ancestors, or to hear within their walls the tinkle of that bell, a sound carrying with it a richer freight of religious association than any other sound or incident in Christian worship.” He goes on to speak of the Mass as “a mystery so tremendous, so profoundly attractive, so intimately associated with the keystone of the Christian faith, so vouched for by the testimony of Saints.”

But here is the passage that made the deepest impression upon me when this memorable essay first attracted my notice: “If the Incarnation be indeed the one Divine event to which the whole creation moves, the miracle of the altar may well seem its restful shadow cast over a dry and thirsty land for the help

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of man, who is apt to be discouraged if perpetually told that everything really important and interesting happened once for all, long ago, in a chill, historic past. It is the Mass that matters. It is the Mass that makes the difference—so hard to define (so subtle is it), yet so perceptible—between a Catholic country and a Protestant one, between Dublin and Edinburgh, between Havre and Cromer.” The man who could write thus would, I am sure, if he could consult his own feelings and convictions, be more generous, or rather more just, to the poor Catholics of England in the matter of schools than is likely to be tolerated by the stupid bigotry of the selfish and self-sufficient English middle-classes.

“Between Dublin and Edinburgh.” Thank God, Dublin, our beautiful Catholic capital, was the example that occurred to Mr. Birrell, in this solemn context. And indeed Dublin deserved to be singled out when there is question of practical devotion to the Mass. She deserves this honour, for she is pre-eminently a city of crowded churches and of crowded altar-rails. Nay, in the

whole extent of the world-wide Catholic Church, what place is there—unless it be some convent chapel, and especially some favoured shrine of Perpetual Adoration, where at every moment of every day and of every night worshippers keep watch before the tabernacle — but amongst the abodes of the ordinary faithful living in the world, is there a spot where faith in the abiding presence of our Eucharistic Lord is proved more strikingly than here?—here in this dear Church of St. Francis Xavier, which at noon of this busy week-day sees so large a throng of pious worshippers gathered together, waiting to receive Our Lord's blessing in the beautiful rite of Benediction.<sup>1</sup>

As to-day, so every day for some seventy years in the past, this divine

<sup>1</sup> I let these words stand without trying to generalise them ; but in reality they hold true of the other churches of Dublin and of hundreds of churches in the towns and villages of Catholic Ireland. So, too, thank God, in innumerable places in the "Greater Ireland" of the United States and the other lands in which the Irish race is scattered ; and in the beautiful lands of France and Spain and Italy, which, in spite of noisy atheists and revolutionists, are Catholic to the core.

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work has been going on under this hallowed roof, even as it shall go on for hundreds of years after every one that is here now has been judged by the same Lord Jesus Christ, whom we shall then see in the glory and majesty which are here concealed beneath the sacramental veils. We can apply to the Eucharistic life of our Lord in this tabernacle near us His own test: "By their fruits you shall know them." What have been the fruits of His presence here? Before this altar what mysteries of grace and mercy have been wrought in thousands of souls year after year, day by day, hour by hour! How many sinners have been converted, how many mourners have been consoled! How many acts of faith have been made before that tabernacle yonder, how many acts of hope and charity and contrition! How many good resolutions have been formed here! How many holy inspirations have been felt and obeyed!

May these blessed effects be produced in our hearts also! And, if it can still be needed for any of us, the change

## Jesus at the Well 23

from sin to grace and virtue, the change from coldness and callousness to fervent faith and love, may Jesus in this Sacrament of His love work here and now the mighty change that He wrought in one sin-laden bosom on that far-off day when, wearied with His journey, He sat beside the well !

## THE BLESSED EUCHARIST IN THE BIBLE

THERE is hardly any of the lies of heresy more outrageous than the doctrine—which no sane man ever held honestly in practice—about the Bible being the sole, all-sufficient, self-interpreting Rule of Faith. Even taking it as it has come down to us in Latin or Greek—nay, taking it as it has been turned into English—we know what different doctrines different persons have discovered in the same words. The very nature of the different books that make up the Old and the New Testament, the manner in which they were originally written and the manner in which they have been preserved, would convince any candid man that God, who inspired those holy books, did not expect each of His human creatures to draw from them for himself the complete and entire body of doctrines which he was to

believe. The absurdity, the impossibility of such a provision is heightened immensely when we go back from this present age of perpetual printing and universal reading to the many centuries of the Christian era before printing was discovered. The more we learn about the modes of preserving and multiplying writing in those ages, the more grotesquely idiotic is seen to be the dogma which, as we have said, no sane man could seriously propound—about the Bible, and the Bible only. The facsimile of a page of some ancient manuscript of the Sacred Scriptures, such as is given in many popular works, would illustrate vividly the view here put forward. There is arrant vulgarity and narrow-mindedness in applying the notions of a tract-distributing and so-called Bible-reading age to ages in which the mass of the people, and even the nobles, were as little able to study for themselves the written Word of God as any poor woman nowadays who cannot read, but knows her prayers and says her Rosary and assists devoutly at Mass, and knows the substance of

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the Catechism better than she could put it into words, and who believes firmly all that God has taught through His Word and through His Church, without whom we could not be sure that in the Bible we have His written Word, or that we understand His Word aright. By-the-bye, do the sectaries whose doctrine we are denouncing hold that a knowledge of the first of the three R's is necessary for salvation?

These pretensions of heresy about the self-interpreting all-sufficiency of the Bible have very wrongly been made by some of the faithful in certain countries an excuse for neglecting the humble and pious study of "the holy, the sublime, the awful Word of God."<sup>1</sup> But a more legitimate consequence to be drawn from the undoubted fact that the Apostles were sent forth not to write but to teach all nations, and that their mission is continued for ever by a living, teaching Church, is to make us bless God

<sup>1</sup> A phrase from one of Cardinal Wiseman's essays. These lines may be read by some whose duty it is to procure, in the first place, a New Testament for the use of their household. Let them do so without a day's delay.

that even in His written Word, though it is *not* the sole Rule of Faith, He has taught so plainly the "mystery of faith" to which our thoughts are now turning. The doctrines and practices implied in Confession and Communion, as carried out in the living Church throughout the Christian ages down to our time, are of such a nature that of them in particular it must be evident that they could never have been accepted by the faithful if they had not been placed by the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church in the original deposit of the Faith. We should be bound to believe them on the sole authority of the Church, with whom Jesus promised to abide all days, even to the consummation of the world. But Jesus in His mortal life took special pains, as we may say, to propound clearly the great Eucharistic dogma, and the Holy Spirit has furnished in the Sacred Scriptures more numerous and more cogent proofs of this doctrine than of any other held in common by those who call themselves Christians. The Blessed Trinity, without belief in which

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Christianity is impossible, is not more clearly revealed.

All the Evangelists record minutely the institution of the Blessed Eucharist except St. John, who wrote chiefly to supply things omitted by the other three. Strange to say, his place here is taken by St. Paul (1 Cor. xi.), who acts the part of an Evangelist with regard to no other fact in the Gospel. Is not this alone a proof of the transcendent dignity of this event? But, besides the reason already given, there is this additional excuse for St. John's silence, that he had already in his famous sixth chapter become the Evangelist of the Eucharist by recording minutely the promise that our Lord had made beforehand of this, His supreme gift to men—a promise rendered immensely clearer and more emphatic by the incredulous manner in which it was received by some to whom it was personally addressed in the first instance. This is the only point we can dwell upon now, for these are not the pages, nor this the pen, for formal controversy.

As the incredulity of St. Thomas was

to prove more plainly the reality of our Lord's resurrection, so the incredulity of these Capharnaites removes all doubt as to the meaning of His Eucharistic promise. If they had in silence submitted their understanding to the authority of the great Teacher and Wonder-worker, our modern Protestants might say : "Oh, it is all a mistake. If *I* had been present, I should have objected, and the Redeemer would have explained." Well, this Protestant *was* present, and he urged his objection : "How can He give us His flesh to eat?" Our Lord did not even ignore the objection and pass it by with silent contempt ; but He answered it by repeating His promise in stronger and plainer terms, to which nothing similar occurs in any other part of the Sacred Scriptures, and for which there is no reason or justification in any idiom of the language which our Lord spoke ; but on the contrary, such expressions were so utterly distasteful that they could not have been used unless required by the literal truth of the statement. And so the persons to whom the words were addressed understood them. The "hard

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saying" was not softened for them by these words. They persevered in their incredulity, and departed.

"After this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (John vi. 67). After seeing so many miracles, after hearing so many wonderful words from the lips of Jesus, they turned away and left Him for ever, saying practically : " We believe in you no longer—this settles it—we renounce you for ever." And our Lord, who loved each of them so tenderly that He would have died, and was to die, for love of each of them, lets them depart without a word of remonstrance, whereas the Protestant explanation of His meaning would surely have kept them at His side. Why did He not cry after them —" Come back ! You misunderstand Me. I only mean something more commonplace, much less difficult to accept, than you and your fathers have believed." But no, He lets them depart ; for what they refused to believe they had rightly understood, except perhaps a secondary and incidental error as to the manner of receiving this food, which our Lord's

words had already explained sufficiently for docile faith, which the future would in good time make plain, and which in days long past the royal prophet had explained by calling the Messias "a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech"—of whose priesthood the only particular recorded is that his sacrificial oblation consisted of bread and wine. Therefore our Lord, whose heart yearned for each of those erring souls, did not cry after them, "Come back!"—though in His infinite wisdom He foresaw that His language and His conduct would throughout all the after ages help to confirm the Eucharistic faith of the Catholic Church and her saints and doctors and holy nuns and millions of the simple faithful, who would kneel before the Tabernacle and say with the great St. Thomas Aquinas :—

"Adoro Te devote, latens Deitas !  
Quæ sub his figuris veré latitas."

## THE BLESSED EUCHARIST PREPARATION—PERPETUATION

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat ; and if I shall send them away fasting to their own homes, they will faint in the way."—MARK viii. 2, 3.

IT was a little disappointment to me to find that these words occur in the Gospel, not of St. John, but of St. Mark. They were spoken by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on an occasion very like the one that is described in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel ; and the reason why I felt disappointed at not finding them there is because in that famous chapter St. John at once goes on, as I wish now to go on, to attach to the whole incident a Eucharistic meaning. Or, rather, our Divine Redeemer Himself, by His subsequent action, has given a sort of a sacramental significance to that miraculous multiplication of the few loaves and fishes. The miracle by

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which Jesus fed the multitude in the desert led on to the first great preparatory announcement of the wonderful Sacrament by which He was to feed His people during their journey through the desert of this world. That was the last of the long series of types by which the Blessed Eucharist had been prefigured—the tree of life, the paschal lamb, the manna of the desert, the bread and wine offered by the priest, Melchisedech, and many another type and symbol.

But now all types and figures are to be replaced by the divine reality. Jesus begins, as it were, to break the astounding news to His disciples—begins to prepare them for this crown and consummation of the union that He has established between His Sacred Humanity and His poor human creatures, making Himself for ever, and not for a few years only, our Emmanuel, “God with us.”

This closer sacramental union might almost seem to follow as a consequence from the Divine Incarnation itself. A certain acute lawyer and strenuous man

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of the world, whose work in this world came to an end some years ago, used to wonder how any Christian could find a special difficulty in the Blessed Eucharist—any one who really accepted the Christian faith which begins with the supreme marvel of the Incarnation, a dogma that involves belief in the Blessed Trinity and in many other utterly and transcendently incomprehensible mysteries. Our Lord Himself said (John iii. 16) : “God so loved the world as to give His Only-Begotten Son” ; and St. Paul asks (Rom. iii. 32) : “He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, hath He not also with Him given us all things ? ” Yes, God who gave Himself to life for our sake and then to death for our sake has shown sufficiently that His love for us is so great that the proofs of it will be limited only by His wisdom and His power, which have no limits, which are infinite.

Let me say it over again in a different way, for we can never fix it too firmly or too deeply in our hearts and minds. The two great proofs of Our Lord’s

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love are His birth and His death. The Blessed Eucharist unites them both. It confers on each of us a privilege and a happiness similar to what the Blessed Virgin enjoyed during the months after the Annunciation ; and it enables our divine Redeemer to die mystically for us anew on countless altars.

The altar is both Bethlehem and Calvary. Bethlehem : the devout communicant, every day and not on Christmas Day only, may give an almost literal meaning to the simple prayer of some one<sup>1</sup> who probably did not know the full force of his own words :

“Sweet Babe, new-born  
On earth again  
Each Christmas morn,  
To dwell with men !  
Though my hands hold  
No precious things,  
Nor myrrh nor gold  
Of Eastern Kings—  
Though I’ve no part  
In gold or gem,  
Make Thou my heart  
Thy Bethlehem.”

“ Thy Bethlehem ! ” Yes, and Thy

<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, in the *Spectator*.

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Calvary! “O Sacred Banquet wherein Christ is received and the memory of His Passion is recalled!” The Sacrament, and especially the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, represent and repeat the Passion of Our Lord, for which the first celebration of it at the Last Supper was the immediate preparation.

But we are thinking now of the preparation for the Blessed Eucharist itself; and the first distinct and definite preparation for that marvellous mystery of God’s love and power was made by our Divine Redeemer when He wrought the miracle and delivered the discourse to which we referred at the beginning, and which are recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John’s Gospel. Rising, as was His wont, from corporal to spiritual things, after supplying thousands miraculously with the food for the body, He the next day in the synagogue of Capharnaum promised explicitly, over and over, the miraculous food for the soul, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood; and those who refused to accept His promise He allowed to depart in their incredulity. “They walked no

## The Blessed Eucharist 37

more with Him"; and we do not know whether any of these unhappy men, these earliest Protestants, ever came back to the fold.

One imagines that one could have guessed beforehand that the fulfilment of such a promise would be kept for the very last. This stupendous token of Our Saviour's love could not be followed by the ordinary work of life. Even on the great day itself, the first Holy Thursday, it was reserved for the evening, the last thing to be done before Our Lord entered upon His Passion. We could hardly conceive it otherwise. After that there was nothing that He could do for us but to die. "Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John xiii. 1). *Usque ad finem.* Not only to the end of life, but to the uttermost limit of love.

The immediate preparation for that first celebration of the Eucharistic mysteries was made by St. Peter and St. John. St. John himself makes no

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allusion to this honour. St. Matthew also does not mention any selection made for this purpose among the disciples. But St. Mark (xiv. 13) says that two of the disciples were sent, and St. Luke (xxii. 8) tells us who these two were. "Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the pasch for us,'"

Not for the first time nor for the last time were these two Apostles singled out and joined together. Together and closest to Jesus on Mount Thabor and in the Garden of Olives, they were witnesses of their Master's glory and of their Master's grief. Together they ran to the empty sepulchre in search of their Arisen Lord. In the formal enumeration of the Apostles in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Peter and John are joined together, not the brothers Peter and Andrew, or the brothers John and James. In the third chapter of that same history of the infant Church, Peter and John are named together and apart from all the rest four times. And now we see them sent together to prepare the altar for the First Mass.

Peter and John, the Apostle of Faith and the Apostle of Purity, the disciple who loved Jesus and the disciple whom Jesus loved, were chosen to be the First Sacristans. It might be said that they had earned the privilege by special devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. St. Peter had already made the first great act of faith in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood when the very promise that was now to be fulfilled was made expressly the test of faith by Our Lord. When many refused to accept that promise and called it "a hard saying," and, on account of it, instead of being drawn to Jesus, left Him, renounced Him, abandoned Him, Our Saviour appealed pathetically to those who remained: "Will you, too, leave Me?" But Peter spoke up boldly for all. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And now to him who made this profession of faith, and to him who, alone among the evangelists, set it down in writing for our instruction, the immediate preparation for the Eucharistic Banquet is entrusted.

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"Make ready a large dining-room furnished, that I may eat the pasch with my disciples" (Luke xxii. 12). *Cœnaculum magnum stratum.* "A supper-room of ample size and well furnished." This last circumstance is added both by St. Luke and St. Mark—not merely cleansed, but decorated with a certain amount of adornment, as if to show that in due time stately basilicas should arise, and that we ought, when able, to exhibit our faith and love externally by giving of our best and richest and fairest to the temple and altar and tabernacle of Our Eucharistic Lord.

*Tantum ergo sacramentum veneremur cernui.* "Let us, therefore, with heads bowed down, adore so great a sacrament." Let us give to It first the worship of our faith. In order not to try our faith too much, in order not to make belief too hard, God in His mercy has deigned to speak very clearly when announcing this "mystery of faith," as it is called emphatically in the very words of consecration—more clearly, perhaps, than with regard to any other

dogma of the Christian religion. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke describe minutely the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. St. John came last with his Gospel, and his special function was to supply what the other evangelists had omitted. And so, though he had recorded for us so fully the promise of the Blessed Eucharist, he does not set down the fulfilment of the promise but only the divine discourse which Our Lord delivered at the Last Supper. But, as if to supply for St. John's silence, the Holy Ghost inspired St. Paul to assume here, and here only, the rôle of an evangelist, describing the institution of the Blessed Sacrament as minutely as St. Matthew.

Let us with all our hearts and minds bless God and thank Him for the fulness of this revelation, which leaves the unbeliever without excuse. *Ita ut sint inexcusabiles* (Rom. i. 20). Let us bless and thank Him above all for the infinite love that is displayed in this Gift of gifts, and in all the circumstances that accompanied the giving of it, on the eve of the Passion when Our Lord was about to withdraw

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His visible Presence from this earth. This was the First Communion of the Church, and, like the First Communion of every Christian child, it was an epoch of tremendous importance in her history. But, like the child's First Communion, it is specially wonderful and specially wondered at, only because it is the first ; and in reality, if there could be greater love and mercy than infinite love and infinite mercy, greater love and mercy would be shown in every Communion administered by the hand of a poor, sinful priest than when the First Communion of the Church was distributed to the Apostles by the hand of the Divine Redeemer Himself. For, meanwhile, through what centuries of coldness and unbelief and schism and heresy, through what abysses of tepidity and impiety and sacrilege, Our Lord has deigned to force His way in order to seek a lodging in my heart!

“Do this in memory of me.” Yes, assuredly, this boon was not to be confined to that one solemn night, but was to be repeated for ever over all the earth, from the rising of the sun to the going

down thereof. This crowning grace of graces and mercy of mercies is the perpetuation of that miracle of omnipotent love, which makes this divine food our daily bread—our viaticum—that is, food for our journey, not only for the short journey through the valley of death, but also for the long journey over the arid plain of life. The very institution of the Blessed Eucharist implies necessarily its perpetuity. I will call a strange witness in support of this assertion. The brilliant writer who has been for several years a prominent figure in the political world, perceives clearly the necessity for the perpetuation of this boon, supposing it to have been once granted. In a remarkable article contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* ten years ago (April 1896), Mr. Augustine Birrell wrote :

“ Nobody nowadays, save a handful of vulgar fanatics, speaks irreverently of the Mass. If the Incarnation be indeed the one divine event to which the whole creation moves, the miracle of the altar may well seem its restful shadow cast over a dry and thirsty land

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for the help of man, who is apt to be discouraged if perpetually told that everything really important and interesting happened once for all, long ago, in a chill, historic past."<sup>1</sup>

Surely, that is a natural and reasonable feeling. Surely, if the Incarnation be in reality, what all Christians must believe it to be, it must have caused a greater and more permanent change in the relations between God and man than the cold, carping, jealous spirit of heresy is willing to allow. Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth and Bethania and Calvary cannot now, under the law of grace and love, be less tender towards the human race whom He has redeemed at so great a cost—less intimate and more distant than was the God of Israel under a sterner dispensation. The Gospel of Love prepares us for other mysteries of the divine condescension. Having once drawn so near, He will not remove Himself far from us. For instance, when you have gone through

<sup>1</sup> Other very striking expressions of this brilliant writer have been quoted in an earlier page of this book, "Jesus at the Well."

the Stations of the Cross—that most solid devotion which ought to commend itself to any sincere, devout, and sensible Protestant as an excellent method of bringing up vividly before our minds the realities of Our Lord's Passion—has it ever occurred to you that such a person might well be shocked at the end when he reflected that all the love of which he was thus reminded had been crowded into three days or three hours, past and gone nineteen centuries ago, and that since then God and His blessed spirits seemed to have withdrawn further than ever before from this earth? On the other hand, is there not a relief and a consolation to the heart and the intellect when we recall that Catholic Faith has a very different story to tell? All those tender proofs of a personal love between God and man do not lie far away back in "a chill, historic past." *The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us* is the summary not only of our Lord's mortal life, which ended with the Crucifixion, but also of His immortal life which began with the Resurrection. "The

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gifts of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). Jesus is still our Emmanuel. "Jesus Christ, yesterday and to-day and the same for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8). Jesus, who crushed so much suffering and love and tenderness into a short life about the Augustine era of Roman history, has not held Himself utterly aloof ever since. The wonder is that heaven and earth are still so far apart, that we are so bound down to the world of nature and sense—that the Son of Mary does not intervene far more in human things by inspiration, by sacrament, by miracle.

For us, at least, children of the Catholic Church, the promise that is fulfilled in the Blessed Eucharist must not be a hard saying, but *dulcis super mel et favum*; "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Not merely a delicious drop or two of honey, but the whole hoard of sweetness stored up in the honeycomb itself. This sacrament does not merely bestow upon us a passing impulse of grace, but unites us with the very Lord of Life, the very Author of grace.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And foremost among those words are Thy sacramental words, *This is My Body, this is My Blood.* We have known Thee in the breaking of bread. Thou wilt not send us away fasting lest we faint on the way. No; but Thou wilt Thyself be our viaticum, to sustain us not only at the journey's end, but through all the toils and perils of that portion of the journey of life, shorter perhaps than we think, which still lies before us, between this present moment and the awful moment—through Thy mercy, O Lord, may it be also the happy and blessed moment—of our death!"

## BENEDICTION : ITS HYMN AND ITS LAST WORD

THE hymn that we hear most frequently and speak of most familiarly is the "Tantum Ergo." So we call it from the words it begins with; but the second of these shows that this is not the beginning of the hymn, that much must have gone before; for *ergo*, "therefore," implies that what follows is a conclusion based on what has been already said or sung. As a fact, what is sung at Benediction is the last two of the six stanzas which form the great hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas, the "Pange Lingua," which is recited in full in the first vespers of the feast of Corpus Christi.

It was characteristic of the pious nature of Judge O'Hagan that his favourite among the hymns of the Church was not the more famous one

which he had himself translated admirably, the “*Dies Irae*,” nor yet Sir Walter Scott’s favourite, the “*Stabat Mater*,” but this Eucharistic hymn, “*Pange, lingua, gloriosi Corporis mysterium.*” A very different man, the Italian poet Carducci, has said: “The ‘*Dies Irae*’ of Thomas of Celano, the ‘*Stabat Mater*’ of Jacopone da Todi, the ‘*Pange Lingua*’ of St. Thomas of Aquino — these are the three great Christian odes.”

In this glorious lyric the poet-theologian expounds the nature and describes the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, ending with the assurance that, if the senses fail to announce to us the presence of our Lord, “faith alone suffices to strengthen the sincere heart,” to confirm it, to make it firm and strong and constant in the belief in this grand mystery of power and love.

“*Et, si sensus deficit,  
Ad firmandum cor sincerum  
Sola fides sufficit.*”

All this is supposed to be before our minds, or at least in our hearts, when

we begin the Benediction hymn; for the second word of it is *ergo*, "therefore." "Let us therefore, with heads bent down, adore so great a sacrament. Let faith supply for the deficiency of the senses," from which our Eucharistic Lord is hidden by an impenetrable veil.

A pious Irish layman—whose piety and Irish birth would never be suspected by the reader of the great mass of his writings, amongst which some devotional little tracts seem oddly out of place—in one of these last Mr. Percy Fitzgerald says that "the versicle and prayer of Benediction are full of point. Thus could anything be more appropriate than 'Thou hast given them bread from heaven, holding within itself all that is delightful'?" The prayer that follows he calls "one of the finest, most practical, and most compelling prayers that we have." He translates it thus:

"O God, who in this marvellous sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be so penetrated with the sacred mystery of Thy Body and Blood

as to have within us the full fruit of Thy Redemption."

Familiar though it is, it is well to have the original Latin under our eyes :—“Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis tuae memoriam reliquisti ; tribue, quaesmus, ita nos corporis et sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari, ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus. Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.” Why has not Mr. Fitzgerald reproduced “venerari” and “sentiamus” more exactly? And why is “jugiter” suppressed or turned into an adjective in “full fruit,” an expression which here is hardly correct theologically? Some of the alternative readings in this other version are not offered as improvements but as variations. “O God, who under a wonderful Sacrament has left to us the memory of Thy Passion, grant to us, we beseech Thee, to venerate the Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Blood in such a manner that we may feel perpetually within us the fruit of Thy Redemption. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever.”

Fitly does this prayer, when used at Benediction, content itself with this short ending, which at other times in the Divine Office and in the Mass of Corpus Christi is expanded into "Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen." Here at the altar-foot, with our Lord in the sacramental species exposed before him, the priest, who is about to draw still nearer to our Lord, thinks only of Him, our Incarnate God, not of the First Person or the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, but only of the Second, and rejoices that, though the Son of God has sunk so low and disguised Himself so utterly for love of us, nevertheless He all the while lives and reigns in glory, and will live and reign in glory for ever and ever.

After this hymn is sung, the humeral veil (so called from "humerus," "shoulder") is fastened round the shoulders of the priest, who, rising, ascends slowly to the predella and draws near to our Sacramental Lord, who, since the beginning of this function, has been raised

before the adoring gaze of the faithful in that beautiful combination of crystal and jewels and silver or gold which, from its office of "showing forth" the Blessed Sacrament, is called a Monstrance, "ostensorium, ostensoir"—"monstrance," not "remonstrance," as it has often been wrongly called in English. After bending his knees to the ground the priest takes hold of the monstrance, and, turning to the people, who are prostrate in adoration, waiting to receive our Lord's blessing, he makes over them with the monstrance a large sign of the Cross. It is the Crucified Himself who, under a still deeper disguise, blesses His people.

The rite of Benediction ends with the singing of the shortest of the one hundred and fifty Psalms of David, which comes next but one before the very longest of them, Psalm cxviii. This Benediction Psalm is Psalm cxvi., *Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes.* But psalms, when sung or repeated in the Church's liturgy, have always an antiphon before and after them, and this in the present case is that word of

mutual exhortation, “Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum Sacramentum.” This is given both before and after the little psalm in the most recent editions of the *Benedictionale*. Unfortunately it is omitted altogether in some places, and in many places it is sung only before the psalm. But it is more necessary after than before, for antiphons are sometimes before the psalm announced only by the opening words, whereas they are always sung in full after the psalm. This second singing of the “Adoremus in æternum” is a very graceful and satisfying conclusion and finale for the beautiful Benediction service. “Let us adore for ever the Most Holy Sacrament.” Does this final invocation indicate the predominant end and aim of this devotion of predilection which we call Benediction? We understand generally by that word the blessing that our Blessed Lord gives to us as He is raised above our drooping heads, but perhaps at first it meant rather the homage that we offer to Him. For in the last stanza of the “Tantum Ergo” we desire to present

to God “salus, honour, virtus et benedictio.” Has the last of these suggested our name for Benediction, and has the first of them suggested the French name, “salut”? At any rate it is well to note that this beautiful rite only ends with the blessing, but that it is mainly a brief exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which is placed on high before us to receive the tribute of our gratitude, love, and adoration. “Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum Sacramentum.”

## ENCOMIUM EUCHARISTICUM

SOME one has said that the man who makes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before is a benefactor of his race. A benefactor of another sort is the man who plants in the minds of his fellow-men a good thought or principle that may recur to them from time to time, and keep their hearts inclined to goodness and God. This is rather too high a tone to take in beginning a paragraph or two which will aim at fixing in the reader's memory an easy Eucharistic aspiration. The form in which it is most likely to be remembered is the rhyming translation of Father Edward Caswall, the poet of the Birmingham Oratory—a title that strictly belongs to him, though the first two Superiors, Cardinal Newman and Father Ryder, were poets also, and much more gifted men than the author of *Lyra Catholica*.

## Encomium Eucharisticum 57

“O Sacrament most holy !  
O Sacrament divine !  
All praise and all thanksgiving  
Be every moment thine.”

This aspiration is given in this form at page 127 of Father Ambrose St. John's translation of the *Raccolta*, where he states that Pope Pius VI, at the beginning of his long and eventful Pontificate, May 24, 1776, granted to all the faithful who, with contrite hearts, say this ejaculation to the Blessed Sacrament an indulgence of 100 days once a day; but this indulgence may be gained three times on any Thursday (in honour of the Eucharistic associations of that day of the week) and every day during the octave of Corpus Christi. A plenary indulgence may be gained once a month on the usual conditions by those who have said it every day for a month. The next Pope, Pius VII, “whose constant wish (we are told) it always was to promote more and more the frequent use of acts of adoration to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament,” granted an indulgence of 100 days to the faithful every time they repeat this ejaculation at the sound of the bell

## 58 Encomium Eucharisticum

which marks that Benediction is being given with the Blessed Sacrament, and the same indulgence to those who repeat it at the two Elevations of the sacred species at Mass.

In the *Raccolta* the Italian form is given in the third person, not the second :

*"Sia lodato e ringraziato ogni momento  
Il santissimo e Divinissimo Sacramento."*

In another place, Father St. John translates this in prose : "Blessed and praised every moment be the most holy and divine Sacrament!" Why not still more exactly : "Praised and thanked every moment be the most holy and divine Sacrament?" Slightly different is the Latin form in which the aspiration appears among the *Preces ante et post Missam pro opportunitate Sacerdotis dicendae*, published by Frederick Pustet of Ratisbon, and others :

*"Laudes et gratiae sint omni momento  
Sanctissimo ac divinissimo Sacramento."*

Which of these is the original and which the translation it is hard to tell. Perhaps the original was Spanish, for

it was a Spanish bishop who originally propagated this ejaculation, at least in a form substantially the same.

This little prayer, in its rhyming Italian form of eleven words, is the subject of a little treatise in ten chapters, which calls itself an *Operetta Spirituale*. It is joined with another little Italian treatise on "Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament." The book is complete in the copy before us, but it has no title-page; no clue to authorship or date is forthcoming.

The second half of this very pious booklet is entitled, *Sopra le Parole ed i sensi dell' Encomio Eucharistico*, namely, the Italian rhyme which it here repeats. The first chapter states that the author of this "Eucharistic Eulogy," which (it says) is offered every day by countless lips to the Most Blessed Sacrament, was the Blessed John di Ribera, who was born at Seville in the year 1532, became Archbishop of Valencia and Patriarch of Antioch in 1569, died at the age of eighty years in 1611, and was beatified by Pius VII in 1796. He was a most holy and zealous prelate,

## 60 Encomium Eucharisticum

pre-eminent for his devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament. One token of this devotion was his choice of a name for the college which he founded and richly endowed in his archi-episcopal city. He called it Corpus Christi College; and his Jesuit confessor, Father Escriva, who wrote his Life the year after his death, tells us that he was delighted to learn that Blessed John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Sir Thomas More's friend and comrade in martyrdom, mentioned in one of his letters another Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. The salutation to the Blessed Eucharist which he originated and propagated seems to have been, *Bendito y alabado sea el santissimo Sagramento*, though the Spanish could easily have forestalled the rhyminess of the Italian form almost in the same words. The French version gives them very exactly:

*"Soit loué et remercié, à tout moment,  
Le très saint et très divin Sacrement."*

"Moment" and "Sacrement" rhyme in French, but "mōment" and "Sacrament" do not rhyme in English; and

## Encomium Eucharisticum 61

this necessitates a certain infidelity, as in Father Caswall's version, and in this other, which is in one respect more faithful :

“ May praise and thanks be ev'ry moment given,  
To the Most Holy Sacrament of heaven ! ”

The examples of authorised translations of indulgenced prayers quoted in Father St. John's introduction to the *Raccolta*, prove that all of these versions are sufficiently faithful to safeguard the indulgence granted to the original ejaculation.

The little Italian book that I referred to above, in repeating for the last of very many times this *Encomium Eucharisticum*, which I have given in so many forms, adds to it this couplet :

“ *Benedetta e lodata sempre sia  
L'Immacolata Concezione di Maria.* ”

“ May praise and blessing ever be,  
Mary Immaculate, to thee ! ”

Or more literally thus :

“ For ever blessed and praised o'er land and sea  
Mary's Immaculate Conception be ! ”

## THE BLESSED EUCHARIST A HELP TO FAITH

### I

THE glorious array of converts to the Faith in all the centuries since heresy began its worst ravages in the sixteenth century, but especially the conversions that have taken place in England and the United States since the middle of the nineteenth century—these conversions, in their number and their character, are a powerful and delightful confirmation of the faith of the believer, and ought to open the eyes and touch the heart of the unbeliever—so many and so good, often so learned, often making terrible sacrifices, showing by their after lives that the change they had made was a change from darkness and disquiet to light and peace—these hundreds and thousands of converts have not been duped by the demon, but have been guided by the grace of God.

Among the most illustrious of these converts, I have often thought with deep gratitude and consolation of two who are seldom named when some branch of this subject is referred to. Newman and Faber and Manning, and other priests and prelates, and even many others less distinguished, are brought forward as trophies of the power of Catholic truth ; but Hope Scott and the Marquis of Ripon would hardly be named in such a context. These two laymen are in themselves a sufficient proof that the Catholic Church is the sole depositary of Christian truth, for any one who recalls what sort of men they were and what were their surroundings and the circumstances of their lives. Consider the position that Hope Scott held in his professional and social world and in the estimation of such men as Gladstone, and then behold that man embracing the Faith with full and calm conviction, making it the guide of his life, and turning Sir Walter Scott's beloved Abbotsford into a new home for the Blessed Sacrament.

And Lord Ripon—before his con-

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version the head of the Freemasons, and after his conversion Viceroy in India, and holding his place in the political world through very many years till his death—a man of the world, a level-headed politician, leader of the Liberal party in the House of Lords, yet living a life of faith, not merely accepting the dogma which seems to contradict reason and the senses most directly, but actually drawn into the Church by that very dogma before all others. I am anxious to record in this place what Archbishop Bourne said at the Eucharistic Congress of London in the summer of 1909.

“Speaking of one who died the other day in England, after a long life spent in the service of the Church and a long life spent in the service of the State, I remember once the late Lord Ripon telling me that it was precisely this doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament that brought him into the Catholic Church. He used to say in his humble way that, until he became a Catholic, religion had not been very much in his life, that he had not thought much about religious

matters, but that there was one fact that always was clearly in his mind: that if God had willed to come down upon this earth, He still must be present somewhere. And as he thought, in the midst of his public duties, over the various religious beliefs that were presented to him, he saw that in the Catholic Church alone was taught this doctrine of the perpetual abiding Presence of God upon the earth, and so, little by little, his thoughts turned towards the Catholic Church ; and he never hesitated to affirm that it was the doctrine of the Real Presence that had made him a Catholic. To him the Blessed Sacrament was in very truth the source of his Catholic life. He made very frequent Communions, was a daily hearer of Holy Mass, and, as his health failed, the one thing he was anxious about was that he might have Mass said in his own house so as not to miss Mass when he was no longer able to go to the church, and that he might have every facility for receiving Holy Communion. That is the example of one who had to take a great part in the public life of his country,

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and who, from the day he made his submission to the Catholic Church, found in the Blessed Sacrament the source and strength of his Catholic life ; and that is what surely the Blessed Sacrament ought to be to every one of us. The concupiscence of the flesh, the pride of life, the concupiscence of the eyes, the temptations to sin against Almighty God by the desire of power or place, or by the longing for greater riches, or by the excitement from human passion —only in the Blessed Sacrament are we to find a remedy for all these things ; and there must be many among you who, as you look back over your past lives, will recognise that perhaps in your youth it was the Blessed Sacrament alone that kept you true to Almighty God ; that, when passion was strong and the allurements of the world very great, it was the thought of the Blessed Sacrament and the frequent reception of Holy Communion that gave you the strength to persevere. How many, again, there are who in the stress and turmoil of life would soon have lost all thought of heavenly things, were it not for Holy

Communion ! If your conscience bears testimony to you that in the past the Blessed Sacrament has been to you the life and the food of your souls, make known your experience to others with whom you come in contact, preach devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as well as practise it, and pray to God continually that in that divine Sacrament, in every moment of difficulty in your lives, you may find a solace and encouragement to the end. Let us, then, continually thank Almighty God from the bottom of our heart for having given us a firm faith in the Blessed Sacrament, and let us pray to Him also that we may find in the Blessed Sacrament the safeguard of our faith in God, in Providence, and in all the things that He has taught, and a strong and mighty force against every temptation that may assail us.”<sup>1</sup>

## II

What poetry, what pathos, what sublimity in the dogmas of our Faith ! The

<sup>1</sup> I have changed a few words in the Archbishop's last sentence.

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human mind, left to its own imaginings, has devised nothing comparable. The parallelisms in heathen religions are merely traces of primeval revelation or borrowed from Christianity.

Above all, the Blessed Eucharist. If it could be a mere delusion that inspired the liturgies, the *autos sacramentales*, the *Lauda Sion*, the Cathedrals, the Masses of Palestrina and all the rest—still more, that sustained the martyrs, the tempted, the suffering, the poor, the dying, as the Blessed Eucharist has done; that inspired such lives as those of St. Teresa, the Curé d'Ars, and many a hidden saint in the cloister and in the world; such deaths as those of St. Tarsicius, Blessed Imelda, and thousands of Christian death-beds everywhere all the world over, which are manifestly sustained and irradiated by the power of the Divine Viaticum—if all this were the result of a mistake, what a magnificent mistake! But when we recall ever so vaguely and passingly the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, the accounts of the Last Supper, especially that by which St. Paul makes his solitary intrusion into the office of

Evangelist, and when we think of the nature of this dogma, and of its place in the tradition and literature and practical life of the Church, no docile Christian mind could escape the conviction that such a mistake is impossible and that nowhere would the daring words of Richard of St. Victor be more applicable than in this impossible hypothesis : *Domine, si error est, a te decepti sumus.* “Lord, if there be a mistake, by Thee we are deceived—it is Thou who hast led us into it.” But no! this promise was made clearly and unmistakably by Him who alone could keep the promise. To no one could such a superhuman, unearthly, ineffable and inconceivable device have suggested itself except to Him only who alone could carry it into effect. *Potuit, voluit, fecit.* “He could, He would, He did.” *Dominus meus et Deus meus. O Deus meus et omnia.* My Lord, my God, my All!

But alas for the coldness of my faith! Thanks be to God, I hate and scorn all forms of infidelity and heresy and blasphemy more and more every day, and I see more and more clearly the supreme

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reasonableness of simple faith ; but, alas ! the thought of the Eucharistic Presence too often excites at first wonder and dismay rather than the childlike faith and love and gratitude which I greatly desire to feel. It is poor comfort to add that the same might almost be said of the thought of the Presence, the Omnipresence, of the Omnipotent God. And yet the absence of vivid, constant, ever active and, as it were, sensible faith in this last fundamental truth shows, I hope, that as I am not so insane as not to have the firmest and most explicit faith in the Infinite Deity, the Almighty Creator, without whom life and thought and being would be impossible and unthinkable, and nevertheless I can feel in this cold, far-off manner towards Him in whom I live and move and am, so also the coldness and dryness of my faith in the Blessed Eucharist are compatible with the firmest faith in a dogma for which I hope and believe that I would be glad to die. One day, kneeling alone before the altar of a certain domestic chapel, I dared to put my present train of thought almost exactly

into these words : If that little lamp of the sanctuary does not represent the true Faith, if it is a meaningless toy, if it does not betoken what we believe it to betoken, if it be not a sentry before the King's palace—palace indeed modest in dimensions, but still the royal dwelling—if all this could be a mistake or a fraud, who or what would remain to believe or trust ? The Church itself which centres all its worship here would crumble. All the holy souls, learned and simple, who have lived on these sacramental truths—St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomas à Kempis, Calderon and Michael Angelo, Sir Thomas More and Judge O'Hagan (two lawyers coupled together thus with distinct reference to points of affinity in our present context)—and all the bishops and priests, and holy and simple people, like the peasants of Ireland, who have nourished their souls on Faith and Holy Communion through centuries of persecution—all those who in any way contributed to raise churches and convents—all the holy nuns of perpetual adoration and others, of whose religious life the tabernacle

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is the centre and focus—all these and the entire Catholic Church of all the ages would, in this horrible supposition, have been the mere dupes of a delusion, a lie. There would be chaos, anarchy, annihilation—no truth, no hope, no God! I know that all this is raving nonsense; but raving nonsense also is the supposition which it sets forth. Lord Kelvin (a true scientist, not a conceited sciolist) said that atheism in any form and degree is so nonsensical, so contrary to natural reason, that he could not find terms to describe it that would not at once appear ridiculous. For in reality there is no stopping-place between Catholic truth and atheism. But atheism is insanity. "That way madness lies." "If I could get over the preliminary difficulties that are common to all religions," said the second Lord Lytton, "I should become a Catholic." But those preliminary difficulties must be overcome; for, as sure as our self-conscious soul exists, God the Creator exists eternally, and we are His creatures, and we must believe in Him, adore Him, and love Him. *Credo, adoro, amo, O mi Deus!*

## “THEY SHALL LOOK UPON HIM”

FATHER William Eyre, S.J. (1823-1898), hid many of his great gifts very successfully ; being, for instance, much more ready to help others in their literary work than to put forward literary work of his own.<sup>1</sup> Many who lived with him and thought they knew him well would hardly have deemed him capable of writing a poem so pious and so pathetic as his “Thoughts after Benediction,” to which he prefixed, as

<sup>1</sup> The sumptuous “Life of St. Ignatius,” by Stewart Rose (the Countess of Buchan), was in great part his work. His anonymous version of Father Valuy’s *Directorium Sacerdotale* is double the original in bulk and worth. He was theological censor of the *Dublin Review* during the editorship of Dr. W. G. Ward, when the censorship of that important periodical was by no means an irresponsible sinecure. His share of the great wealth of his father, Count Eyre, enlarged and beautified Stonyhurst College on such a scale as almost to claim for him the title of “founder.” He ought not to be forgotten.

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a second title or motto, *Et Clausa est Janua*—"The Door is Closed"—recalling the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.<sup>1</sup>

They close the door ! They hide from sight  
The Lord of life and love and light—  
That God who, risen, took His place  
    Full oft 'mid friends that loved His Cross ;  
Then, in a moment, hid His face,  
    And left them mourning o'er His loss.  
Yes ! He, a while, was here in view,  
Amongst us all, His chosen few ;  
Now He is gone, and leaves us sad,  
Half sorry that we were so glad.  
    For joy is o'er :  
    They close the door :  
And we, with Mary, in the gloom,  
Weep by our Love within the tomb.

They close the door ! Now all depart,  
And leave the church with swelling heart ;  
While I from out my trance awake,  
    As one who was of sense bereft ;  
And once again my place I take  
    With friends on earth I deemed were left.  
For I had thought me in the sky  
With angels worshipping on high ;  
And some with harps made joyous sound,  
And some sweet incense waved around.  
    My dream is o'er :  
    They close the door !  
But music's chimes, and fragrance rare,  
To show what was, still flood the air.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xxv. 10.

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They close the door ! I feel too late  
How hidden blessings round us wait ;  
For He was here, who is alway  
    Our hope on earth, our bliss above ;  
Nor did I beg of Him to stay,  
    Nor thank Him for His gift of love.  
My speech was not, "The day wanes fast ;  
My house, sweet Jesus, go not past !  
With burning words my heart inflame ;  
In breaking bread teach me Thy Name."  
    No ! All is o'er :  
    They close the door !  
My God has vanished from my sight ;  
My sun is set, and all is night.

They close the door ! Oh, how I long  
For that glad day when I, among  
Thy countless lovers, Jesus blest,  
    Shall see Thee without let or veil ;  
And, leaning on Thy loving breast,  
    That Presence praise which may not fail :  
When Thou hast opened heaven's gate,  
And all the saved shall on Thee wait,  
To gaze on Thee for evermore !  
For no one there shall close the door—  
    No, never more  
    They close the door !  
But we shall see Thee as Thou art,  
And love for aye Thy Sacred Heart.

I fear it is coldness of heart that has made me sometimes almost resent the exaggeration with which I have been disposed to charge these verses. Why should the worshipper feel such a difference when our Sacramental Lord,

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who came forth to receive our homage and to give us His benediction, allows Himself to be placed again within His prison, and the door of the tabernacle is shut—*clausa est janua?*

But may not this sense of reaction be really felt without any pretence or exaggeration? I can imagine a very devout and loving heart finding such delight in the rite of Benediction that, when it is over, the change of feeling would almost be such as this holy priest describes. The faithful gathered together by a special summons, the flowers on the altar, the many lights, the music, the silver and gold and crystal, the monstrance, the tabernacle unlocked, our Eucharistic Saviour raised on His throne to be seen by all, the *Tantum ergo Sacramentum*, the rising clouds of incense, the *Panem de cœlo*, and the prayer *Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili;* and then, after many secret acts of faith and love and adoration in the hearts of the assembled faithful, our hidden Saviour, with the help of the uplifted arms of His priest, is raised to bless all the people—men, women,

and children—kneeling there (*cernui*) “with heads bowed down”—all this is to living and loving faith a spectacle inconceivably more pathetic, more thrilling and more solemn than when the Sovereign Pontiff gives the blessing *Urbi et Orbi* from the *loggia* of St. Peter's.

Happy they who have “an insatiable appetite for Benediction”—as I once heard remarked of the good people of Limerick. What graces must be bestowed during this sacred rite! What contrition must be excited in many hearts! What holy resolutions must sometimes be inspired during these blessed moments, which are indeed moments of benediction!

This sensible devotion is not necessary to make our prayers and spiritual exercises profitable to our souls and pleasing to God. But it greatly strengthens and consoles us; and that we have not more of it is generally our own fault. Now, what is it that God often makes the occasion of these special graces, these thrills of inspiration, this increased warmth of devotion?

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It is frequently the open manifestation and exhibition of the sacramental species under which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is really present in His humanity and His divinity.

Benediction opens with a brief Exposition, though we generally reserve this latter term for a church function which places the Host visibly before us during a longer space of time, even many hours. The Church does this to exercise our faith, to stir up our fervour, to gratify the devotion of the faithful. Therefore it would be wrong to yield too far to that feeling I have hinted at, as if it were the same thing to have Jesus near us whether we see Him or not. The Church's mind is shown by her granting an indulgence for the mere act of looking devoutly on the Host when elevated after the Consecration. Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., with his wonted erudite ingenuity, has discovered in this the reason of one of the ceremonies of High Mass—namely, that torch-bearers come in and kneel behind the priest during the Consecration, and depart immediately after. He remarks also

that for this purpose, in order that the white Host might be seen more clearly against a dark background, the custom has in some places prevailed of drawing a dark veil above the altar behind the chalice at the most solemn crisis of the Mass.

There are some nuns whose beautiful vocation is to adore perpetually our Eucharistic Lord exposed amidst a blaze of lights above the convent altar.

“They spend their lives before His Throne,  
God seen by Faith alone—  
His own, His own !  
Through half the night and all the day  
They pray, they pray, they pray—  
Oh, happy they !”<sup>1</sup>

When for some reason this perpetual Exposition may be suspended for a little time, these souls feel lonely and, as it were, orphaned, because, although their Lord is still near them within the tabernacle, they do not see Him as they are wont under the Eucharistic disguise.

There is a remarkable passage in the “Revelations of St. Gertrude,” which shows how acceptable to God is this longing to see the Sacred Host, while it

<sup>1</sup> Written at Drumshanbo, County Leitrim, Ireland.

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illustrates also the drawing which devout people mostly have to gaze intently on the Blessed Sacrament. She was divinely instructed that as often as a man gazes with desire and devotion on the Host, where the body of Christ lies hid sacramentally, so often does he increase his merit in heaven ; and that, in the future vision of God to all eternity, there shall be to him so many special and congruous joys as the times that on earth he gazed with desire and devotion on the body of Our Lord ; or, which is greatly to our present purpose, when he so much as desired to do so, and was reasonably hindered from doing it. Hence, Lancisius gives it as one of his special devotions for the Octave of Corpus Christi to try to hear Mass where you can see the Host lying on the corporal ; or, if this be impossible, to look intently at It in the monstrance. So necessary in Christian things is familiarity in order to reverence.

• Yes, loving familiarity does not conflict with true reverence. The reverence that shrinks from familiarity, and does not desire nearness and union, is not

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the reverence that God wants from His poor human creatures on whom His heart is set. We must beware of any trace of Jansenism in our awe and reverence for the Eucharistic mysteries. That arid and desolating heresy strove to keep the faithful away from the familiarity which Jesus sought for specially in this device of His love. We, on the contrary, must strive to give Him what He wants: "Child, give Me thy heart!"

These thoughts have clustered chiefly round the holy rite of Benediction. They may end with a suggestion which some might find useful in their visits to the Blessed Sacrament. As there is a Spiritual Communion as well as a Sacramental Communion, might we not at some of our visits try to receive Benediction spiritually? Let us go through the preliminary acts in imagination—repeat some of the Benediction hymns and prayers—and then, bowing our heads and adoring our Hidden Lord, whose very disguise is hidden from us, let us beseech Him to bless us and those for whom we are moved

82 They shall look upon Him to pray—the members of our household, our relatives and friends, our city, our country, our people, the Universal Church, and the Sovereign Pontiff at its head; or else some individual soul—some one whom we know to be in trouble, some poor sinner, some one who may be at that moment struggling with a terrible temptation, or some one who may be passing through the dreadful ordeal of death. Unselfish prayers of this kind might help us to find more practical interest and consolation, less dryness and dullness and vacancy, than we perhaps experience sometimes, even when kneeling before the tabernacle.

## THE EUCHARISTIC LIFE OF JESUS

### I

THE Blessed Sacrament, which our Saviour instituted immediately before His Passion and death in order that it might subsist in the Church until the end of time, continues the life of Jesus on earth in three ways.

First, it is the continuation of His real and personal Presence. What gives the Blessed Sacrament an infinite dignity over all the other Sacraments is that our Redeemer is there really and substantially present. With Sacred Scripture and with the Church we believe that Jesus is in the Eucharist not only in figure and symbol, but in all reality; not only by the faith of him who receives It, but in all truth; not only by the action of grace, but substantially with His divinity and His

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humanity, such as men beheld Him here below, such as He is now in heaven; not only in a transitory manner at the moment of Sacrifice and sacramental Communion, but in a lasting and enduring manner by a presence which continues as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. We believe that the Eucharist is at the same time a Sacrifice and a Sacrament.

This excellence of the Blessed Eucharist is a thing marvellous and divine, but guaranteed perfectly by the words of promise and of institution, by the constant faith and interpretation of the Church, and by a mass of other reasons which flow from the intimate relations of the Man-God with the Church and with us. By the Eucharist Our Lord realises most completely the promise which He made to us not to leave us orphans (John xiv. 18). Instead of His visible presence He is not content with sending us the Holy Spirit and promising to return to us again, but He gives us His own Presence, real though veiled under the sacramental species. Moreover, the Church, by her immediate

origin in Jesus Christ, has for mission to make us children of God and to prepare us for the beatific vision in heaven. The Church is the Spouse of Christ and His mystical body; such is her excellence and her sublimity that she requires Jesus Christ Himself as Sacrifice and Sacrament. The Child of God has a right to a heavenly and divine nourishment; the spouse has a right to the body of her Spouse. Jesus Christ, as God, creates all things, preserves and governs the entire creation; as Man-God He creates the Church, preserves and governs it. He is not only the Founder and Architect of the Church. He is infinitely more: He forms part of her organism, He cannot be separated from her. He is in her the principle and source of being and life. A momentary apparition of Jesus Christ, a simple representation intended to take His place could not, therefore, suffice for the Church; there was needed for her the Real Presence, the perpetual Presence, of Jesus Christ. The Christian Church thus becomes the link between the Church prefigured by the people of

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Israel and the Church of heaven. She enjoys the privilege of the heavenly court, she is superior to the Church that prefigured her. *We* do not want the pillar of fire, the ark of the covenant, the manna, the water gushing miraculously out of the rock; we have the reality that succeeded types and figures. To use the words of St. Paul, we in very deed are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels and to the Church of the first-born . . . "to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than Abel's" (Heb. xii. 22-24). The Redeemer thus responds to the deepest aspirations of the human heart. The heart of man wishes to render to God divine honour—wishes to know where its God is—wishes to possess Him, to unite itself to Him. All that is in man, all that is around him, ask, "Where is your God?" (Ps. xli. 4, 11). The "soul has thirsted after the strong, the living God" (Ps. xli. 3), and the strong, the living God

has answered this ardent desire of the human heart, has fully satisfied it. He has fully justified the name that the Christian religion bears. It is the Religion of Christ, because Christ is all in all.

## II

By the Eucharist, moreover, Jesus Christ is not only really present in the Church, but He there continues His mortal life and renews its mysteries—all and more than all the prominent facts which we commemorate in the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin.

In the first place, our Saviour in the Blessed Eucharist renews the mysteries of His conception, of His birth, of His Presentation in the Temple, of His appearance there among the doctors, of all His hidden life. Every day the Eucharistic mysteries place our Lord in a state analogous to that which He took upon Himself in the Incarnation. The Eucharistic species subsist independently of their proper substance, as the

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human nature of the Word Incarnate subsisted independently of His natural personality. In the Eucharist, as in the Incarnation, Jesus comes down from Heaven at the word of a virgin and rests within virginal hands. In the Eucharist, as in the Crib, He appears under the white veils of the sacramental species which serve Him in some sort as swaddling-clothes ; in the Eucharist He is adored, He is presented before the Lord. Here, too, our Lord renews the hidden life by the silence and obscurity which remove His Sacred Humanity from our sight, by the poverty in which he gives Himself to us, by His complete surrender that He makes of Himself to us, by His incredible obedience to His priests who dispense this Sacrament, and by His silent and invisible action in souls. Not without reason does the Church, in her offices and Eucharistic hymns, constantly bring these two mysteries together, the Incarnation and Transubstantiation. The Preface of the Mass of the Blessed Sacrament is that of the Nativity, Christmas Day, and more than once Jesus Christ has deigned to show Himself in

the Blessed Eucharist under the amiable form of a child.

Secondly, in the Eucharist our Saviour renews mystically the mysteries of His public life. In this manifold Presence in all places, in this submissiveness with which He lets Himself be carried through our streets and country lanes, we recognise the unwearied Teacher, the Pastor of our souls who, in the days of His public life, was never tired of traversing the Holy Land, spreading everywhere the truth, benediction, consolation, and healing. How many of His parables find in the Eucharist their explanation and their most sublime realisation! For instance, the parables of the Great Supper, of the Wedding Feast, of the feast ordered by the Father of the Prodigal in the joy of his son's return. Thus in the second of these it is far easier to realise at the heavenly Banquet of earth than at the everlasting feast of heaven that terrible question: "Friend, why hast thou come here, not having on the wedding garment?" None can enter heaven except the worthy, but, alas! the unworthy can sit down to the Eucharistic

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Banquet. Again, does not our Lord continually renew in the Blessed Eucharist the miracle of the water changed into wine, the miracle of the multiplication of the bread? Does He not here heal a multitude of the dumb, the blind, the deaf, the palsied, possessed persons tortured by the most cruel passions? The Eucharist by its very nature is a continual reproduction of the greatest miracles which have for their object the Body of Jesus Christ. With what liberality, with what magnificence, does Jesus exercise here the most amiable virtues that He practised in His public life: patience, goodness, mercy, beneficence! Long ago, in the Holy Land, He was present only in a single place at a time; now He is everywhere, everywhere we find Him, everywhere He waits for us, always ready to receive us, to listen to us, to console us, to defend us. What an atmosphere of grace this saving presence of our Saviour in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar spreads around us! What beauty, what riches It communicates to our Christian life by so many amiable devotions, of which It

is the animating principle: visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction, perpetual adoration, solemn processions which recall the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem!

As for the mysteries of the Passion, it is hardly necessary to say how they are reproduced in the Blessed Eucharist. The Blessed Eucharist is essentially the memorial of our Saviour's death. The Holy Mass is the perfect reproduction of the last Supper and Calvary—of the Last Supper, for the sacrifice is the same; of Calvary, because the Holy Mass is not only the commemoration but the representation, the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross in all its parts, except the manner of immolation; it is the complement of it, applying to us the graces of the Sacrifice of the Cross. But, alas! the Eucharist renews too often sufferings which the Redeemer has not wished, has not sought for, and which bring us neither honour nor profit. In the hall, after the Eucharistic Banquet, there are not wanting Judases who touch the Body of the Saviour with impure hands, who receive It into a sullied heart.

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Too often this hall in which Jesus offers to us the Feast of most faithful love has become like the courtyard of Pilate's palace; too often scenes of horror which are beyond description are re-enacted there. The Eucharistic Life of Jesus is on the part of God an abyss of miracles and love, and at the same time on the part of men it has often been an abyss of ingratitude. Finally, in more than one particular, the repose of Jesus in the tabernacle recalls the repose of Jesus in the tomb.

But the Blessed Eucharist renews also the glory of the life of Jesus risen. The Body of Jesus is here in a glorified state; it is even, in certain respects, more glorious and more admirable than it was in the Resurrection and than it is now in heaven. It is the most glorious, the most excellent state with which a body can be endowed; it is the most brilliant victory of grace and glory over matter. And this glory the Redeemer communicates to our bodies through the Blessed Eucharist. This is the reason why He remains amongst us, why we receive Him. In the sweet and amiable rela-

tions which Jesus holds with us by means of the Eucharist, one cannot but discover a figure of the apparitions of our Divine Redeemer after His Resurrection and of His relations with the apostles. For us, as for the disciples going down to Emmaus, He makes Himself the companion of our pilgrimage; from the tabernacle He watches over us; in the difficulties of the way He encourages us and sustains us by His consolations; He blesses our efforts and our labours to make them fruitful and to secure our success, as He blessed the fishing of St. Peter.

Thus does our Saviour renew in the Blessed Eucharist the mysteries of His life on earth, all except the Ascension, for He wishes no more to part from us. His presence in the tabernacle is a compensation which consoles us for not yet being able to contemplate Him in heaven, for not having lived during the blessed days of His mortal life. We need no longer envy the Holy Land nor the days when "all flesh saw its salvation." Through the Eucharist we have Nazareth, Bethlehem, Thabor, Jerusalem, Calvary, the sepulchre. With-

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out faith what would it have served us to be contemporaries and witnesses of our Lord as He lived amongst them? Now it is easier for us to believe, for we have motives for believing incomparably more numerous.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this meditation a German Jesuit, Father Maurice Meschler, has been followed pretty closely.

## LOVE UNLOVED

THIS is a very beautiful and touching aspiration, especially when expressed in the wonderful Latin tongue, so terse, so precise, so sonorous, worthy of its honour as the sacred language of the Church: *Cor Jesu, amas, non amaris, utinam ameris!* “O Heart of Jesus, Thou lovest, Thou art not loved; would that Thou wert loved!” This is the chorus of the following hymn of reparation, of which the authorship is not even indicated by initials, in an old number of the English *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*.

O God of love, what strange compassion moved Thee  
To share on earth Thy fallen children’s lot?  
Unto Thine own a little child Thou camest,  
Helpless and poor, yet they received Thee not.  
O Heart so loving, Thou art not loved,  
O would that Thou wert loved !

Thirty long years Thy love grew never weary,  
Through toilsome days, through silent prayerful  
nights ;  
And in return, what bitter scorn and outrage  
Were heaped on Thee by those cold Nazarites !  
O Heart so loving, Thou art not loved,  
O would that Thou wert loved !

Thy deeds of love, Thy miracles of healing,  
Men will not, even with poor thanks, repay ;  
Thou bringest gifts, and yet they do but mock Thee ;  
Thou bidd'st them follow Thee—they turn away.

O Heart so loving, Thou art not loved,  
O would that Thou wert loved !

As the great King, foretold by ancient prophets,  
Meekly once more Thou comest to Thine own ;  
With cruel thorns Thy faithless people crown Thee—  
Thy sceptre is a reed—a cross Thy Throne !

O Heart so loving, Thou art not loved,  
O would that Thou wert loved !

Still doth Thy love detain Thee on our altars,  
Pleading so tenderly, yet all in vain ;  
O loving Lord, Thou meetest but derision,  
Or light forgetfulness, or cold disdain !

O Heart so loving, Thou art not loved,  
O would that Thou wert loved !

Few of my readers are likely to learn  
by heart these pious lines ; but I trust  
that some will add to their repertory of  
habitual ejaculations that yearning reproach : *Cor Jesu, amas, non amaris,*  
*utinam ameris !* “ Sacred Heart of  
Jesus, Thou lovest, and Thou art not  
loved. Ah, would that Thou wert  
loved ! ”

## THE GREAT GRACE OF DAILY MASS

IT is sometimes an almost overpowering shock to the soul when we partly realise the contrast between the sublimity of the Christian faith, man's duty and man's destiny, and then the vulgarity, the folly, the triviality of the lives that are lived by so many who are not heathens, who are not profligates, who are not sceptics or pretended atheists, but who are Christians, and even think themselves practical Christians. Nay, the realities of even a truly Christian life fall far short of the theories that would naturally be suggested by the study of the Christian creed and the Christian law.

The conflict between theory and practice stands out most sharply in all that concerns the Blessed Eucharist. Among the devices used to excite in us the due reverence for the Holy Mass,

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many pious writers have recalled the risks run by our Catholic ancestors in times of persecution in order to hear Mass—in the early centuries before paganism had been vanquished, and in many countries since then, as in heathen lands where pious missionaries penetrate; or in England, where, at the peril of their lives and fortunes, Catholics gathered by stealth into the house of some Catholic where a priest was sheltered, or in Ireland, round the Mass-rock (pointed out still in so many places), where the faithful assembled, in spite of all dangers, to be strengthened for the long fight in which, thank God, they conquered gloriously. The same perils were braved again in Catholic France at the time of the Revolution; and it may be that God will purify and revivify that glorious Church by passing it again through some such ordeal in these coming years.

The most flagrant discord between faith and practice is perhaps to be discovered in the neglect that many sincere Catholics show in using their opportunities of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of

the Mass. I wonder how many millions there are who could hear Mass every day without any harm to the ordinary duties of social life, and who yet fail habitually to do so. But this is only one—perhaps the chief, but only one—of the shortcomings by which many of us (God forgive us) offer too good an excuse for the doubts and sneers of those who hate the religion we love.

The Church makes it an obligation for us to assist at Mass once a week, but that is a minimum. Her wish is that the faithful should share as often as possible in the fruits of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Experience proves, besides, that piety, true and solid piety, the piety that produces great Christian works, cannot dispense with this as its daily succour, or if not daily, at least very frequent. One meets occasionally with persons greatly attached to their religion, and at the same time imbued with a great dread of going too far with it; they seem as much bent on avoiding good practices that are quite optional as on avoiding violations of the divine law. Such a manner of acting, which may be

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the result of narrow-minded training in faith, may not be positively blameworthy in the individual, but it will not carry him very far nor very high.

In order to be a generous, devoted Christian, forgetful of one's self and ready for good works, one must have in the heart reserves of energy, self-denial, virtue, which the Holy Sacrifice alone is able to produce and to maintain. It may be laid down as a general rule that a person whose position, health, and duties would allow him to hear Mass often during the week, and who voluntarily deprives himself of this supernatural support, will not rise above a very moderate level of piety. If, on the contrary, such a person uses constantly this incomparable means of sanctification, he will make rapid progress in virtue and in the love of God. He will be very quickly and very completely transformed.

There is nothing astonishing in this. Piety is, above all, the love of God. In its primitive meaning the Latin word *pietas* signifies love. Now, what exercise of piety is most capable of exciting

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and sustaining love in our hearts? Is it not the one which recalls and renews under our eyes the greatest act of love of which we have been the object on the part of Our Divine Redeemer? All those who assisted with a simple and upright heart at the death of Jesus on Calvary were penetrated to the very depths of their souls by this spectacle of incomparable grandeur. Those who already loved the Divine Victim felt themselves inflamed towards Him with a tenderness ready for all deeds of heroism; the Good Thief and the Centurion believed in His divinity; many even of His enemies confessed themselves vanquished and went away, striking their breasts. Well, this solemn and touching scene is repeated every time that the priest pronounces over the bread and wine the words of consecration; Jesus is immolated anew for us and before us. There flows forth from a single Mass a torrent of love capable of inundating the whole earth, a wave of grace that would suffice to convert all mankind. No doubt our eyes do not see the prodigies which opened the

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eyes of the spectators on Golgotha, but we have thus over them the advantage of our faith : we know, beyond the power of doubting of it, that it is indeed Jesus, the Son of God, our Redeemer, our Head, our Model, who immolates Himself there for us—an immolation sufficiently efficacious to atone by itself alone for all the sins of Adam and his descendants.

It is good that we should pray and that we should sacrifice self ; but what are our poor efforts worth ? Miserable sinners, we are like the bird caught in the net, which strives in vain to disengage its wings in order to fly away ; the bonds of the flesh and of evil hold us down in the mire. But God the Saviour is there on the altar, immolating Himself for us, interceding for us and with us. Seeing the poverty of our offering, He lets us join it with His own royal oblation, and thus hide our misery under the splendour of His riches. Let us profit by this divine condescension ; let us unite with this prayer and this sacrifice of our Head and our Redeemer our cold prayers,

our small sufferings, our weak desires of virtue, our timid attempts at the sanctification of our souls. All this will be ennobled, transformed, deified by virtue of the Divine Blood poured out upon the altar. It will be no longer we who pray, who practise mortification, who labour, but Jesus supplicating, suffering, operating in us, especially if our participation in the Holy Sacrifice becomes full and entire by its natural complement, Holy Communion.

Let us not say, like certain persons who think within themselves, "I can pray better in my own room than in church?" No doubt you can perhaps recollect yourself more easily in the solitude of your chamber; but do you count for nothing the Real Presence of Jesus? And the part taken in the ineffable mystery of the world's redemption—is this a thing to be disregarded? If you can, without taking anything from the duties of your state, make half-an-hour's meditation at home and then assist at Mass, so much the better; but, in choosing between the two, there is no room for hesitation:

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meditation before the altar on which the Holy Sacrifice is consummated is far to be preferred to that which you might be able to make in the quiet recollection of your cell.

It is of course to be distinctly understood that all this applies to those only who can really adopt these holy practices without any interference with their natural duties. The mother of a family who in order not to miss Mass would leave her house in disorder, or would hand over to servants the whole care of her children, would be labouring under an utter and fatal delusion. One meets now and then with persons who deal in this unseasonable piety and whose pretended devotion is singularly like sloth. God has never asked any one to neglect a duty that is certain for a practice which, however useful, is not obligatory. The piety that turns people away from the duties of their state is more apparent than real.

When this restriction, however, has been plainly laid down, we cannot but urge all souls that are desirous of perfection to assist at Mass as frequently

as possible. There is no better means of getting into their lives something of the supernatural : a day begun thus at the foot of Calvary cannot but be rich in the fruits of virtue. Let us pass courageously over the little difficulties which the devil, in partnership here with our corrupt nature, will be sure to suggest : distance from the church, the cold, the rainy weather, the necessity of thus rising too early and going out fasting—all these reasons may have weight in certain cases and on certain days, but generally they are only pretexts, cowardly concessions to nature. Do we not see thousands of persons submitting to these and far worse hardships for a small salary, a little pleasure? And shall divine love be with us less courageous than pleasure or interest? This half-hour gained from sloth, from dawdling, nay, even from work, will not be time lost. It will be God's share of our daily life, and we shall be rewarded a thousandfold by the choice graces that the Heart of Jesus reserves for those who love Him.

What an eager and loving welcome

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the Divine Master on the threshold of heaven will give to those who will have paid him this tribute of fidelity and love each morning! Jesus will recognise them from having seen them crowded every day round His altar, the little chosen flock favoured with His most precious graces. How could they dread Him as their judge, those generous souls who have made Him their friend so long? These are indeed the good and faithful servants whom Jesus with His sweetest smile will invite to enter into the joy of their Lord.

## VISITS OF A RELIGIOUS TO THE DOMESTIC CHAPEL<sup>1</sup>

THERE is no more solid devotion than that of visiting the Blessed Sacrament ; there is none more conformable to the wishes and intentions of Jesus Christ, and there is none more salutary for us or more useful.

I. First, it is a most solid devotion, for it has Jesus Christ Himself for its object. Not merely Jesus Christ in figure or representation ; not merely Jesus Christ in a simple remembrance or in imagination ; but Jesus Christ present really and substantially, present in person both as God and as man ; in a word, present as He is in the highest Heaven at the right hand of His Father.

When at my *priedieu*, or in any

<sup>1</sup> I give this title to my translation of Father Bourdaloue, S.J., to indicate the special class that he addresses.

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other place which is neither God's temple nor altar, I think of Jesus Christ and converse with Him, adoring Him and giving Him all the homage that my zeal and my love inspire me to offer: all this goes on in the mind only, for in reality Jesus Christ is not there, I am not really before Him or near Him, and He is not really before me or near me. When I meditate, even before the tabernacle, upon our Lord's birth, or crucifixion, or resurrection, or ascension, all these are only images that I form in my mind, bygone mysteries which I call up before my memory. But it is not so with regard to the Blessed Eucharist. This adorable Sacrament is Jesus Christ Himself, Jesus Christ whole and entire, that is to say, Jesus Christ in His Divinity and in His sacred Humanity; so that in the visits that I pay to this divine Sacrament, it is Jesus Christ that I visit, it is before Jesus Christ that I prostrate myself, it is with Jesus Christ that I converse. He is here in the very state in which I have sought Him out, in which I mean to honour Him; He is here to receive

me, to listen to me, to answer me. He is here in the midst of an infinite multitude of heavenly spirits who surround His altar, and I am myself in the midst of this blessed company, with whom I join in offering our homage and our incense to God hidden under the Eucharistic species.

If there were a place in the world where God showed Himself visible to our senses, I should be, I think, all eagerness and ardour to seek for Him there, and I should be ready to undertake for this purpose the longest journey. I should make it a merit and a virtue to do so, and I should consider that I could give no better proof of my zeal and my devotion. Well, He would not be more present there or anywhere than He is present in His temple, and, without needing to go far away in search of Him, we have Him near us, in our midst. We do not see Him, indeed, but we have faith, which supplies or ought to supply for the defect of our senses; and what we know by faith is more certain for us than all that our eyes can report to us.

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How comes it, then, that Christians, that Religious, show such indifference for a sacrament wherein Jesus Christ is in person, nay, to speak more correctly, for a sacrament which is Jesus Christ Himself? How comes it that they are so remiss in discharging the service which they owe to Him and in offering to Him their adoration? There are indeed times during the day when, like others, I appear before our sacramental Lord; but, if I examined myself honestly, should I not be obliged to acknowledge that, if these visits were not prescribed by obedience, if I could arrange them according to my own will, they would often be cut off or shortened? Apart from these occasions when perhaps necessity makes me come rather than a sincere piety, how often do I kneel of my own accord at the feet of Jesus to express to Him the feelings of my heart and, as it were, to keep Him company in the solitude to which He has reduced Himself for my sake? Hardly have I been a few moments before the tabernacle when weariness seizes upon me, and instead of

being bound to the place by love, gratitude, and reverence, bound so fast that I must do violence to myself in order to withdraw, it is, on the contrary, with a sort of violence that I drag myself hither, and only when the observance of rule bids me come.

The strangest part of our conduct in this regard is that, at the very time that we show such neglect towards our Blessed Lord in this Sacrament, we sometimes make it an inviolable practice to visit certain oratories, to say certain prayers, in honour of certain saints. To honour the saints is without doubt a laudable devotion; but, after all, our first duty regards the Saint of saints, and every other devotion must give way to this. David desired nothing more ardently than to enter the temple of the Lord, and he would have thought himself happy never to have left it. Daniel, far away from Judea, a captive in Babylon, opened the window of his chamber, three times each day, in the direction of Jerusalem; and there, kneeling down, he addressed his prayers to the God of Israel as if he had been

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in His temple. The first Christians wished to have the Blessed Sacrament always with them. There have been saints who spent almost all their life in His presence ; and how many societies and communities there are in which the most devout observance of perpetual adoration is established ! In fine, we might profit by the example of the world, for in the courts of princes, courtiers remain, as far as they can, in constant attendance upon their royal master. Now the Master, the first superior of a religious house, is Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Why, then, do I come to Him so seldom, especially when I have Him so near me, only a few steps away ?

II. In the second place, the practice of visiting the Blessed Sacrament is a devotion most conformable to the wishes and intentions of Jesus Christ. The

<sup>1</sup> Father Myles Gaffney became a Jesuit in his old age after a long term as Senior Dean of Maynooth College. On his way home from France in 1858, he paid his young countrymen a visit at Beaumont Lodge, Windsor, which was then the English Novitiate, and sheltered some Irish novices before the opening of a Novitiate in Ireland. "I must first pay my respects to the Master of the house," he said ; and he asked us to conduct him to the chapel.

great art of human policy, for those who are employed in the immediate service of the kings of the earth, is to study the royal wishes and to conform to them. Often it is difficult to know them, but we have no need of a long search in order to find out the wishes of the Son of God, the King of kings, the Mediator of mankind. He has announced them clearly enough in His Sacred Scriptures, and He has told us plainly that "His delight is to be with the children of men" (Prov. viii. 31) : for it is the uncreated Wisdom that speaks in this place, and is not Jesus Christ the Wisdom of the Father? He does not say that He has placed His glory in conversing with us, but that He had made it His delight. His glory lies in a thousand other things—in presiding (for instance) over all nature, in reigning over heaven and earth, in ruling over the blessed spirits and making them His ambassadors. But in the midst of all that glory He lets us know that His dearest pleasure is to see us near Him, before Him, not

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so much to glorify Him as to converse familiarly with Him.

Thus, when He announced to His Apostles that He was about to leave them and to return to the bosom of His Father, He promised that He "would not leave them orphans" (John xiv.) in the world, and that, although He would deprive them of His visible presence, He would nevertheless "be with them even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii.). This is what He promised to us through them, and He fulfils the promise every day in the Sacrament of the Altar. He never ceases to repeat to us from the tabernacle what He said to His first disciples, "Behold, I am with you all days," not for a day or a year, but for all days and years to come, till all time shall be accomplished, even till the consummation of the world. "I have entered again into the abode of My eternal beatitude; I have ascended to My heavenly home; but think not that you have lost Me thereby. My Sacrament is the supplement of My Ascension. As you cannot sustain yourselves with-

out Me, I cannot abide without *you*." Thus it is that our amiable Redeemer speaks to us, or, at least, this is the meaning of His words. Now, in order that He may abide with us, we must abide with Him: for, if we do not take care to come to Him, if we do not remain with Him, He will not be with us, and we shall defeat all the contrivances and designs of His love.

From all this I must draw two conclusions. First, that I can do nothing more agreeable to Jesus Christ than to pay Him frequent visits. He calls me, He invites me; and surely in answering such tender invitations ought I not to show the same eagerness that *He* has shown in drawing me to Himself? With the same constancy with which He deigns to wait for me, ought I not to keep near Him as long as possible? But since the different occupations of life and the various duties entrusted to our care withdraw us often from His sanctuary and do not allow us to remain there as much as our devotion would inspire, what shall a soul do that is solidly virtuous and wholly devoted to

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her divine Spouse? In the holy desire of pleasing Him she at least fixes upon certain hours when she goes regularly to visit Him. She comes to the domestic chapel in the morning to salute our Eucharistic Lord and to offer to Him the first-fruits of the day, nay, the entire day, by anticipation. She comes to Him towards the middle of the day to recollect herself, to recover somewhat from the dissipation into which her various duties may have thrown her. She comes to Him in the evening to receive His blessing before the night's repose, to confess with sorrow at His feet the faults of which she feels herself guilty, to implore His grace and the help of His almighty hand against her invisible enemies and against all the dangers to which she may be exposed during her sleep. All this does not suppose long prayers, but only affectionate sentiments, on which each one will dwell less or more according to the dictates of piety and the actual need of the soul.

The other conclusion is that, just as the best proof of our love and gratitude

is often to visit Our Lord in the Sacrament of His love, so, on the contrary, I can hardly show greater contempt for that Sacrament than by leaving It abandoned—I cannot offend this God of love more acutely than by paying no heed to the loving entreaties with which He invites me to come to Him. For, to take up again the comparison with the great ones of this earth, kings and princes, the sanctuary is, as it were, the palace where Jesus holds His court. Now, if the prince's court be deserted, it is a sign that his subjects hold him in slight esteem; and assuredly, if our Redeemer be treated so unworthily with similar neglect, He may well reproach me as He reproached His apostles who in the garden slept while He was praying: “Could you not watch one hour with Me?” (Matt. xxv.). They had nothing to say as an excuse for themselves; and I, too—what pretext can I make use of to excuse my negligence? Our Lord is too utterly abandoned by people of the world; and on whom falls the duty of supplying for them if not on religious whom He has specially chosen

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and with whom He wishes to live in more intimate and familiar intercourse?

III. Finally, this devotion is most useful for ourselves and for our spiritual advancement. One of the most firmly established customs in the world is for people to visit one another; but what advantage is drawn from the greater part of these visits? A great deal of time is lost in them, and, however innocent they may be, they are at least very useless. Often the visitors are such bores and their talk so unpleasant that they become wearisome and very inconvenient. One's peace of mind is sometimes disturbed by things that are said; and not unfrequently conscience is wounded by backbiting, spoken or listened to. In fine, such visits are almost always dangerous and injurious on account of the dissipation of mind that they cause. But it is not so with the visits that we pay to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. These visits are all holy, salutary, consoling, and full of a divine unction. A soul finds therein a thousand helps towards its perfection and draws therefrom inestimable fruits.

These visits are holy, both in the motives and aims which suggest them and in the virtues which are exercised in them, especially lively faith, firm confidence, ardent charity, profound humility, perfect resignation, and sincere contrition. For these are the things that ought generally to engage us, and these do not call for words so much as for secret elevations of the soul.

Again, these visits are all salutary, since here we come to the very source of grace. And in fact, as the fulness of the divinity dwells corporally in Jesus Christ, all graces also are contained in the Sacrament of His Body and His Precious Blood, and it is from this source that our Divine Redeemer spreads them abroad in the greatest abundance: so that, remaining within His tabernacle, He works with regard to the maladies of the soul the same miracles that of old He wrought in Judea with regard to the maladies of the body, when "He went about doing good unto all" (Acts x.). He gives light to the blind, He gives strength to

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the weak, He heals the sick, He brings the dead to life. But to obtain all these marvels from Him it is surely meet that we should have recourse to Him and urge Him by our assiduity to grant them to us.

These visits are full of consolation. Those only who have experienced this can understand it fully. All the life of man is misery and affliction of spirit, and, in spite of the happy prerogatives of the religious state, every one has troubles there as everywhere else. But how happy is the afflicted soul that knows where she can find a remedy for her evils and goes to seek her consolation near Jesus Christ! Sometimes there is need of only one visit to the Blessed Sacrament to change suddenly the disposition of the heart and to make trouble and grief give way to the sweetest repose and full contentment. We come quite sad, fainting and languid; we go away full of strength and courage and even of joy. How is this done? It is a secret reserved to God Himself. Enough for us to know that so it happens; but it does not belong

to us to penetrate to the bottom of the mystery. Let us be content with the experience of so many souls who have borne witness and every day bear witness to this effect.

This, then, is the resolution that I have taken or ought to take: to renew my devotion towards the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar and to address myself to Jesus in all the emergencies and conditions of my life. If I have any doubt to resolve, I will go to consult Him; if I have any business to undertake, I will go to recommend it to Him; if I feel myself attacked by temptation, I will go to implore His assistance. In my tepidities and meanesses He will rekindle my fervour; in my dissipations and wanderings He will recall me to myself; in my fits of disgust, my weariness, my disquietudes, in all my sufferings, interior and exterior, He will console me. In a word, in all my wants He will be my refuge and my most solid resource. Finally, it will not be for my interest only that I come to Him now for the blessings that I hope from Him, but for His glory and

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for the honour that may accrue to Him thereby. Not for myself but also for Him. I will unite myself to Him with all my heart; and rejoicing as much as I can in His divine Presence, I will begin from this hour to do what through His grace I will do throughout a happy eternity, which is to love Him and to possess Him.

## DO WE VISIT HIM?

ONE of the most direct conclusions from even the briefest meditation given to the relations between us and our Blessed Lord in His sacramental presence among us is the resolve to practise habitually that devotion which we call "visiting the Blessed Sacrament." How often in the week, how often in the day, do we pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament? The fear and the shame that most probably the answer to that question causes, or ought to cause to some of us, are not to be got rid of by reminding ourselves that one of the reasons why our Lord Jesus Christ, while keeping (in this literal sense, as well as in another sense) His promise of being with us all days, even to the consummation of the world, has hidden Himself under so impenetrable a disguise, was for the very purpose of interfering as little as possible with human things and with the course of

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our ordinary life. When we have reminded ourselves of this, and made every other valid excuse for the commonplace, worldly bent of our thoughts and of our lives, there will still remain, I fear, solid grounds for self-reproach, and a wholesome dread that we may not have yet reached even that very low level, "the least that can be expected."

Cardinal Wiseman, in one of his essays, remarks that "the familiar expression, 'a visit to the Blessed Sacrament,' contains a depth of faith and of love which long descriptions could not so adequately convey. It declares at once the simple, hearty, practical belief in the Real Presence ; not a vague surmise, not a wavering opinion, not an uncertain hope that the Lord of Glory may be there, but a plain conviction that, as surely as a king dwells in his palace and may there be found by those who are privileged to enter in ; or rather that as certainly as He Himself dwelt once in a stable, making it His first palace upon earth, and was there 'visited' by kings from a distance and by shepherds from the neighbourhood ; that as

truly as He abode in the houses of His friends and was 'visited' by Nicodemus for instruction or by Magdalen for pardon : so really does He now dwell amongst us in such sort that we may similarly come before Him, and have recourse to Him in our wants. Nothing short of the liveliest faith in the mystery could have been introduced or could keep up this practice."

With a slight change these are the words of the first Archbishop of Westminster, who goes on to show, in the second place, that the phrase, "a visit to the Blessed Sacrament," is the offspring and expression, not only of faith but of love. "It implies a certain intimacy, if one may use so homely a term, with Him to Whom it is applied. It gets us beyond the dark regions of awe into those of glowing affection ; it raises us up above the crouching attitude of Israel's children at the mountain's base—nay, carries us straight through the clouds and lightnings at its side to the silent, radiant summit where God and man meet face to face, and discourse together as friends are wont to do."

He who figured in the scene which was before the mind of this holy man in exemplifying thus in these last words the meaning of "a visit to the Blessed Sacrament"—he who alone was indeed permitted to ascend Mount Sinai and to speak with God on its summit—Moses has said: "Neither is there any other nation so great that hath its God so nigh them as our God is present to all our petitions" (Deut. iv. 7). None: although the most cultivated nations indulged their fancy in making gods out of mortal heroes and inventing fabulous deities with human vices and human virtues; yet nowhere in their wildest imaginings is there even the faintest shadow of our divine realities. Anything of this nature in Oriental religion has come to them from some contact with Christianity. For what was typified in Moses' tabernacle is realised in unspeakable ways upon our altars, and the practical conclusions that Moses immediately deduced from God's condescension press more urgently a thousandfold upon *us*. "Keep thy soul carefully, and forget not the words that

thy eyes have seen, and let them not go out of thy heart all the days of thy life" (Deut. iv. 9). Let no day pass by in utter forgetfulness of Him who said with such wistful tenderness : " Do this in remembrance of Me."

Could we defend ourselves against the charge of neglect and forgetfulness with regard to the abiding presence of our Eucharistic Lord, if the number and the manner of our "Visits" to the Blessed Sacrament during the past year, week by week, were made known ?

The best of all "Visits" is to assist every morning at Mass. How many have we known who by this holy habit got grace to bear all the hardships of life triumphantly ! But there are many who act differently, and for whom it is hard to devise excuses. However, we do not know all their circumstances, and we must leave them to the mercy of God, who judges more gently than the tenderest mother. We know ourselves, however. Have we solid ground of complaint against ourselves ? If there were a friend not belonging to the visible body of the Church for whom we

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earnestly desired the grace of conversion to the Catholic Faith—is our conduct with regard to this grand dogma of our creed such as to be likely to impress that friend forcibly, and to help towards the gaining of our prayer? God forbid that we should urge anything unreal or extravagant; and it is true that many upright and virtuous men who have the gift of faith in its fulness, act differently from what their faith would seem to demand from them. But, making all allowances that can be made, there are few towns or villages in which there are not some who could easily make, every morning, what I have called the best of all visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and who fail to do so. Dear reader, are you one of these?

## DIVERS THOUGHTS ABOUT VISITING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

### I. *Too Few and Too Cold*

THERE is hardly any of our spiritual concerns about which we have so much reason to be frightened and distressed as our habitual use of the treasures of grace which the bounty of our Redeemer has stored up for us in the Holy Eucharist ; and there is hardly any part of our conduct towards the Holy Eucharist which ought to suggest more bitter reproaches to our conscience than our negligence in so seldom coming to visit our Blessed Lord, and our coldness and callousness when we come. Alas ! the fewness and coldness of our visits to the Blessed Sacrament leave us no answer to that reproachful question from our Divine Lord : " Could you not watch one hour with me ? "

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The Blessed Sacrament is the centre of the Christian life. Grace radiates from this centre, as light and heat from the sun. There is no such thing as distance of time or place for God; yet He has deigned to bring Himself into physical proximity with us His human creatures. In the Incarnation He became our Emmanuel, "God with us." But He earned that title best of all when He instituted that Sacrament wherein He abides corporally amongst us for ever, and He earns it specially in that character and under those relations on which we are now meditating. For our Eucharistic Lord does not merely continue the sacrifice of Calvary by being offered up in sacrifice on our altars in the Holy Mass. He does not merely unite Himself for a few happy and precious moments to the souls who prepare themselves to receive Him worthily in the Holy Communion. The sacramental species are quickly consumed—the Holy Mass is soon over. But the Heart of Jesus wishes to be near us always, and outside Mass and Communion He wishes to be reserved in our tabernacles that

we may have the opportunity of drawing near to Him at almost any hour of the day ; and, in order that this may be possible, He continues His Sacramental Presence through the solitary watches of the night and at other times when there are only His angels to adore Him. But it was not for His angels that this Sacra-  
ment was instituted.

And here comes upon us that thrill of worshipful amazement which we must all feel when we think, ever so passingly, of the prodigality of God's love and mercy in His dealings with men. *Ut quid perditio haec !* "Why all this waste?" said the traitor Apostle when the generous penitent poured out her precious ointment on the feet of her Redeemer. In like manner nature and reason may be inclined to protest against the spend-thrift munificence of God in bestowing upon us favours which no human heart could ever have dreamed of asking for. But God—the very denial of the blasphemy has a blasphemous sound—God is no mere utilitarian. Neither in the realm of nature nor (still less) in the realm of grace does He limit Himself

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to the strictly necessary. *Copiosa apud Eum redemptio*: "With Him there is plenteous redemption;" and nowhere is the plenteousness of our Redemption more strikingly exemplified than in the manner in which the graces of Redemption are applied to our souls in the Holy Eucharist.

### II. *Jesus Unvisited*

When we are stunned by the thought of our Lord's Sacramental Presence continued during the night, and during, perhaps, many hours of the day when no one visits Him, let us take comfort from reminding ourselves that our Lord could not otherwise realise fully His merciful and bountiful designs. He must needs be always with us ready to receive our homage and hear our petition when we *do* find time to visit Him—ready also to be borne at all hours to the sick and dying who can no longer visit Him. And then meanwhile the angels adore Him in our stead. The thought, too, of our Blessed Lord left thus lonely will touch the heart of some

absent one, who will, perhaps, be moved thereby to make a very fervent Spiritual Communion. Nor is our Lord bound by the laws of matter, or hampered by distance, though for us physical nearness is necessary for many effects.

### III. "*I was in Prison*"

The penal legislation of civilised countries and the whole system of prison discipline have greatly changed since the times which saw the foundation of Religious Orders for the redemption of captives. But even at present there are many ways of helping, or enabling others to help, poor prisoners or those who have been in prison.<sup>1</sup> Taking the words, however, as they stand, it is hard not to give them a touching Eucharistic meaning; and the praise, "I was in prison and ye visited me," or the reproach, "I was in prison and ye did not visit me," can be earned by us according to the manner in which we demean ourselves towards

<sup>1</sup> For instance, to assist by money or otherwise such institutions as Our Lady's Home for Discharged Female Prisoners, Henrietta Street, Dublin.

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our Emmanuel. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is in prison. He is, indeed, a Prisoner of Love. As on Calvary "He was offered because He Himself willed it," so from the tabernacle which "He hath chosen for His dwelling," we may hear the words which the royal prophet makes Him speak in the cxxxii. Psalm : "Here will I dwell, for I have chosen it." But, though it is His love for us that binds Him fast, He is a prisoner. Of His life in the Eucharist, as of His hidden life at Nazareth, the same summary might be given : *Erat subditus illis.* When He emerges from His prison, it is to visit the dying, even as political prisoners have sometimes been permitted, under due escort, to visit the death-bed of a near relative. He is in prison, and we must visit Him, both for *His* sake and for our own. He is God, and He cannot be lonely or sad ; but it may be well for us to act as if He could, and to treat Him with the thoughtful sympathy and affection we should be sure to show to a dear friend who, for no dishonourable cause, was immured in a dungeon. We must visit Him

lovingly as often as we can. We must never again leave ourselves liable to that reproach which pious fancy discovers in those often repeated words of our Redeemer and our Judge: "I was in prison, and ye did not visit Me."

#### IV. *A Flying Visit*

A custom which was hardly known in the middle of the last century has now grown to be pretty general, namely, to raise one's hat as a mark of respect when passing a Catholic church. I hope that those who have not hats to raise, or hats that can be raised, raise their hearts in an aspiration of faith and love. Passing in a tramcar, this is all we can do; but, passing on foot, could we not afford time to pay a very brief visit? Very brief, in order that we may have less excuse for hurrying past on the ground that we have not a moment to lose. Such a slight interruption of walk or talk ought not to interfere with either business or pleasure, except to add earnestness to the one and gaiety to the other. The only thing that

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should make such a little "Visit" uncomfortable for us is sin—serious sin unrepented of and persisted in, and especially sin that the poor creature is likely to repeat soon.

But there must be no such sin. Even if the influence of any evil spirit was strong upon you a moment ago, you must say to it: "Begone! Leave me for ever." Kneeling here before the altar, you must resolutely break away from the unholy spell, and make, this very minute, your peace with God, vowing to secure at the earliest possible moment in the tribunal of penance the ratification of the forgiveness that descends now from the tabernacle upon your soul. And then you will go forth with a braver and brighter spirit to the cares and troubles and duties and pleasures of life. Cares and troubles will not be too hard to bear, duties will not be too hard to do, pleasure will leave peace behind it, if our hearts are right before God, and if we are able to kneel at the foot of the altar in a spirit of living faith and true contrition and humble hope and love.

## V. Weekday "Visits"

Some people, I suspect, refrain from weekday visits to the Blessed Sacrament through a wrong sort of humility. They feel so worldly, so entirely engrossed in the things of this earth, that it would almost shock them to come into a church during a weekday afternoon. They are almost alone at such a time, perhaps quite alone; they feel awkward, cold, not at home. It is different in the morning, when Mass is going on. Then, and especially in the Sunday morning crowd, the electric current of devotion thrills through even *them*, and stirs their languid pulse. But it is something quite different to come in by themselves in the course of the day to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. To do this well is a greater individual effort than when many are gathered together in Christ's name and He is there in the midst of them. *Now*, on the contrary, there is silence, there is solitude; the soul is alone with the Redeemer; and we can say with St. Francis, "*Dio ed io.*" It shows the

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pious, spiritual nature of the father of the holy and amiable Augustus Law, S.J., that he felt most devotion, most consolation before the altar when he alone was adoring there.

### VI. *Going Out and Coming In*

Children coming in from "a message"—as they call any little mission or errand entrusted to them by their mother—consider it a matter of course to go at once to their mother on their return in order to give her an account of their stewardship. In the same way novices on their return from a walk or any duty that takes them out of doors are taught to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. In this respect we must be children and novices till the end. Nay, it is well to pay such a visit both before going out and after coming in. Going out, we may say :

"Lord, send me forth to do Thy will,  
But let me feel Thee present still."

And when we have returned we may say :

"May kindness, purity and truth  
In all my thoughts, words, actions, dwell.  
Abroad, at home. But now, in sooth,  
With joy I seek again my cell."

VII. *A Help to Recreation*

A singularly holy and gifted man,<sup>1</sup> when one of his younger brethren went to confession (as the phrase is) at the beginning of a summer vacation long gone by, advised his penitent to pay a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament now and then every day; and he said very truly that this practice would even add a zest to recreation. Such a practice calms and steadies the soul, and gives it a happy, humble confidence of being right with God, united to God. To the soul that thinks of God—and there is no question here of the wretched souls that forget God, and are immersed in worldly things—to the God-fearing, God-loving, God-remembering soul, there is great uncomfortableness in anything approaching to earthliness, worldliness, forgetfulness of God. "I remembered God and was delighted," was the Psalmist's expedient for recovering peace when his "soul refused to be comforted" (Ps. lxxvi. 4); and "delight

<sup>1</sup> Father Daniel Jones, S.J., who died at Miltown Park, Dublin, June 2, 1869, aged 55 years.

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in the Lord" is his bidding to those who wish God to give them the petitions of their hearts (Ps. xxxvi. 4). O poor child of God, delight in Him, delight in being with Him, whose strange delight is to be with the children of men.

### VIII. "*Ye did not Visit Me*"

God is God, and we are poor, wretched creatures. Yet we may lawfully and fruitfully transfer to our relations with God many of the human feelings of our finite hearts. Jesus in the tabernacle is never alone, still less is He ever lonely; but, when we have it fully in our power to visit Him and do not, we may well take to ourselves the reproach which Ambrose Beaven has thus expressed in the pious American journal, *The Pilgrim*, an offshoot of *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*:

"Hast thou e'er felt thyself to be alone,  
Seeing no face, feeling no presence near ;  
No friendly smile, no cheering voice to hear ;  
Only one aching heart, and that thine own ?  
Hast counted weary hours, or heard the tone  
From some far belfry wafted to the ear,  
Wind-toss'd and quiv'ring as in mortal fear,  
Swelling and dying with a feeble moan ?

Go thou, whose heart has known this bitter pain,  
To Him, who in His mighty love doth deign  
With us to dwell—love's captive—Him thou'l find  
Lone and neglected—aye, but ever kind;  
And gentle the reproach He speaks to thee:  
'In prison, and ye did not visit Me.'"

## IX. *Even an Untenanted Church*

"It is a pious usage amongst Catholics, and one which we ought to imitate, to leave the churches open always; there are so many times when one finds the need of such an asylum; and never do we enter there without feeling an emotion which does good to the soul, and restores to it, like a holy ablution, its strength and its purity." This passage occurs in a book which attracted much notice at the beginning of the nineteenth century, *L'Allemagne*, by Madame de Staël, a gifted woman who had not the supreme gift of faith.<sup>1</sup> Even if our churches were left open for no other reason than the one suggested here—even if a church were nothing more than a consecrated pray-

<sup>1</sup> A similar passage from another thoughtful Protestant, Sir Arthur Helps, is quoted at p. 41 of "Moments before the Tabernacle."

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ing-place, consecrated at least by the prayers that are there often offered up by sincere hearts, especially when many are praying together—even if these associations, and the silence and spaciousness, were the only advantages of a church, making it nothing better than the vast *priedieu* of a congregation of souls, this would still be enough to make the visiting of churches a sacred and a useful custom, *sancta et salubris cogitatio*. But a Catholic church is much more than a cool place, quiet and retired, for the soul to recollect herself; even when the church is so circumstanced that the Blessed Sacrament may not be reserved in the tabernacle. Mass has been offered up there, and will there be offered up again. Nay, I can sympathise with the people who, when a new church has been built on another site, cling somewhat perversely to the old chapel now abandoned, and try to keep it in working order, though Mass will never more be celebrated in it. But how many Masses had been celebrated there back to the penal times, when even the meanest chapel was con-

traband, and when the Mass-rock was not yet a dim memory!

The church, however, which is *not* untenanted, in which our sacramental Lord is not merely an occasional visitor but abides there perpetually, making it His permanent home—how should we feel towards *it*? The thought of the Divine Tenant of the tabernacle hardly leaves our visits optional; and that they are optional, and not strictly obligatory, is only a part of God's mysterious providence in condescending to our weakness so far and expecting from us so little, in allowing the things of time to engross us so much, and being content to receive from us the direct service of so small a portion of our lives.

#### X. *Not at Home*

No doubt it is chiefly through our own fault that we are not sufficiently familiar with our Lord to feel at home with Him thus. We are embarrassed, ill at ease. As far as this coldness is our own fault in the present or in the past, let us bear it humbly and strive to

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remove the causes of it, as far as they are removable; but let us remember that faith is the assent of the heart and mind to a revealed truth, not a mere misty, sentimental feeling. The feelings and emotions befitting a soul that worships alone before the tabernacle might well seem to require an intensity, enthusiasm, poetry, romance, of which our dull, hard, prosaic natures are incapable. And so we shrink from presenting ourselves before the tabernacle at certain times and in certain moods of the soul, imagining wrongly that we are bound to give to our hidden Lord a species of homage that we cannot give. We must strive, indeed, to get rid, as far as may be, of this worldliness, this earthiness of our nature, this shrinking from the supernatural, this feeling of aloofness and estrangement, this seeming half-unreality of faith. At any rate, no matter how we feel at the moment—and feelings are often modified by health, temperament, accidental circumstances and associations—we must be substantially true to our faith and act up to it sincerely, and even (as far as we

can control or guide our feelings) we must *feel* as the great St. Thomas felt when he knelt before the altar and said: "*Adoro te devote, O latens Deitas!*"

## PRAYERS AT A "VISIT"

### I

JESUS, my Lord and my God! Thou art here, and, therefore, I have come. It is the same as if Thou hadst been waiting for me to come, as if Thou wert lonely without me—the same as far as Thy love is concerned, and the same as far as the duty presses on me to return Thee love for love. If one of Thy poor human creatures whom Thou hadst made the instrument of great kindness to me were held captive by sickness or in any other way, and were dependent for a little gleam of comfort upon a visit from me, I should hold myself basely ungrateful if I forgot that friend and stayed away. My ingratitude is far more base and cruel when Thou, O Lord, art the victim of it; and that it cannot pain Thee as it would pain Thy weak creature does not in reality

lessen my guilt. I have come, therefore, to visit Thee, to console Thee, to tell Thee that all Thy goodness is not thrown away upon me, to adore Thee and thank Thee and bless Thee. I wish to love Thee with all my heart, and for Thy sake to be heartily and truly sorry for all my sins of every kind and of every period of my life. Mayest Thou, O merciful God, have mercy on me for ever, and love me for ever. To love Thee and be loved by Thee for ever will be heaven enough for me.

## II

Thou art here, my Lord and my God, and I am here. Thou art here always, and I am here so seldom. I will come oftener; make me come oftener, and, when I come, make me feel more love. For one of the things that keep me away is the fear of not employing well the moments spent in this holy place. It is the fear of being reminded of the dulness of my faith, of the faintness of my hope, of the coldness of my love. But, my good and merciful Lord, I

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humbly trust that a great deal of what is the subject of self-reproach is not deliberate or wilful, and is, therefore, not sinful in Thy sight. Feelings and imagination are often beyond my control, though these, too, may be checked and trained and schooled. Give me the grace to bring them under the obedience of faith, that not only with all my heart and mind and soul, but also with all my senses and feelings, I may love, adore, and serve Thee. As it is Thy delight to be with the sons of men, may it be my delight to be with Thee, O Son of God! So far as it is my own fault that I do not feel even a sensible delight in being near Thee, so far as I am responsible for the distractions and the dryness that seem to waste too many of my moments before Thy tabernacle now and through all my past life, I am very sorry for them, and I crave Thy pardon, O my God and my Saviour!

### III

And now I am going to leave Thee,  
my dear Lord Jesus. *Discedo, mox*

*reversurus.* I depart, but soon I will come again. When a kind and helpful friend goes away from the sick chamber of a friend, he says, "I will come back soon"; and the sick person smiles gratefully: "Ah! do." Say the same to me, O my Lord, bid me return soon. But it is I who need Thee—it is the visitor that is sick and needy and miserable, and in sore want of help and comfort. I am now going away, but bid me soon come back. Thou readest my heart, and, even if it could be hidden from Thee, I wish to be true and sincere before Thee; and, therefore, I do not dare to pretend that I feel it hard to depart—as if I were forced reluctantly to tear myself away from the foot of the altar. Alas, I am too ready to turn to less sacred duties and even to frivolous things that cannot be called duties. Alas, I am more than ready, and I still feel the need to pray, as I prayed many years ago, O my Eucharistic Lord, for more vivid faith, firmer hope, more burning love, more tender sorrow, and for a keener pang

## 150 Prayers at a “Visit”

of self-reproach at feeling it a relief to retire from Thy presence.

And now, in parting for the present, I wish to leave my heart behind me; that is, I wish to turn often back to Thee in thought and desire, to work for Thee in all the little duties that fill my hours, and to be glad when the routine of those duties allows me and sometimes requires me to come to Thee once more. May the angels that are here invisibly present adore Thee, abiding in this tabernacle, joined frequently by poor creatures like me, belonging to that lower race for whose sake Thou dwellest here sacramentally. Ah, when these blessed spirits see the poor return that Thou receivest from us too often, they may well feel the surprise that Job expressed, and they may well remonstrate with the Divine infatuation of Thy love for us: “What is man that Thou makest so much of him, and why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him!” (Job vii. 17). Why but because Thou art God, O my God, and because I am Thy poor, weak, lowly creature who loves Thee. Make me love Thee more,

## Prayers at a “Visit” 151

much more. Send me away now with Thy blessing, O Lord, to do Thy will elsewhere as perfectly as I am able; but call me back soon into Thy sacramental presence. *Discedo, mox rever-surus.* I go, but I will soon return.

## THANKSGIVING HYMN AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

IN my little book, "Communion Day," there is a very beautiful Latin hymn after Communion, beginning *Ad quam diu suspiravi*. It is followed there by my attempt at a translation, in which I did not try to reproduce the dissyllabic rhyming of the odd lines. This exact similarity of form has been achieved by Father Bridgett, C.S.S.R., who was one of the most gifted of the Anglican converts who followed John Henry Newman into the Church. He allowed me to put his version into print; and I reprint it here in the hope that in this form also it may help some souls to spend better some of the precious moments after Holy Communion.

### I

Him for whom my soul has panted,  
Jesus, my embraces hold;  
To my earnest longings granted,  
Granted to my fervours bold.

# Thanksgiving Hymn 153

Powers by which my soul rejoices,  
Shout in one exulting chord !  
Shouting loud with jubilant voices,  
Greet the entrance of your Lord.

## II

Sad I was, my heart dejected,  
Joy nor hope my spirit moved ;  
Reft of Him my soul's elected,  
Reft of Him my best beloved.  
When He came and lowly entered  
'Neath the threshold of my breast,  
Oh, how sweetly round Him centred  
Solaces of heavenly rest !

## III

Not so bright o'er shadowy mountains  
Bursts the radiance of the sun ;  
Not so sweetly do the fountains  
O'er the withered herbage run,  
As the lonely soul down-drooping  
Kindles at her Lord's embrace,  
As, beneath her burdens stooping,  
New-born powers the spirit grace.

## IV

Blessings teem, the day adorning,  
Jesus, when Thou com'st to me ;  
Light and beauty deck the morning  
Bounteously to welcome Thee.  
Every joy Thy presence bringeth,  
Every wish the spirit gains ;  
For in Thee a fount upspringeth—  
Fount which store of bliss contains.

## V

Is there one who would not wonder  
At Thy goodness, gracious Lord,  
If with serious heart he ponder  
On Thy wonder-working word ?

# I 54 Thanksgiving Hymn after

To Thy arms I trembling hasten,  
Thou my coming flyest to meet ;  
Here Thou deign'st Thy arms to fasten,  
Deign'st my love with love to greet.

## VI

I was nothing : in Thy power  
Me from nought Thou didst create,  
And with reason's princely power  
Didst my soul illuminate.  
Thou for me an Infant tender  
In deserted crib wast born,  
And for me Thy life didst render  
On the hated Cross, forlorn.

## VII

Every day with gifts amazing  
Thou all measure dost exceed ;  
But to-day, Thyself surpassing,  
On Thyselv<sup>t</sup> Thou biddest me feed.  
Oh, what heart-felt transports win me ;  
Jesus, name of mighty love !  
Son of God, reign freely in me—  
Reign, oh ! reign my heart above.

## VIII

Grant that I, all creatures spurning,  
Pride and self may wholly slay,  
Till to Thee my heart returning  
Worship due and love shall pay.  
Cleanse whate'er my soul defaces  
In Thine awful purity ;  
So may I in close embraces  
Live with Thee eternally.

## IX

When the sun illumines the heaven,  
When he sinks into the West,  
Dearest Lord, from morn till even  
With me ever take Thy rest.

## Holy Communion 155

Nought from Thee my soul may sever,  
Life nor death may stay our love,  
In sweet union living ever—  
Union which no power can move.

### X

While with life my heart is beating,  
Ceaseless hymns of praise I'll pour ;  
Still I'll sing, in heaven repeating,  
Hymns from never-failing store :  
When, from sight each veil upraising,  
All Thy beauty I shall see,  
And, with choirs of angels praising,  
Love Thee through eternity.

Many have for years found comfort and devotion in making Prince Hohenlohe's hymn (if his it be) one of their habitual prayers after Mass or Holy Communion. Perhaps some who see it now for the first time may use it henceforth for the same purpose, either in the Latin original or in one of the English versions given here and in "Communion Day?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Also in "Altar Flowers, a Prayer-book in Verse," but without the beautiful original which is given at page 61 of "Communion Day."

## HE IS WAITING

THE first of these Eucharistic papers gives its name to the whole book. That paper has already been printed in *The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament*, which the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament publish in New York. In the same pious pages appeared afterwards a poem with the same title, "Jesus is Waiting." Was the verse suggested by the prose? Or did the name occur independently to an American nun in the well-known convent, St. Mary of the Woods?

• • • • •

He is waiting, little children,  
For your voices soft and low,  
For your words of whispered greeting,  
That like perfumed zephyrs blow.  
For His heart is sad and lone,  
On His silent altar-throne :  
He is waiting.

Happy youth, thy King is waiting ;  
Tell Him thou wilt faithful be.  
Through the lonely years He's waited,  
Yearning lovingly for thee.  
Pledge thy troth, O joyous youth,  
To the Life, the Light, the Truth :  
He is waiting.

# He is Waiting

157

Faithless soul, thy Father's waiting  
Precious graces to bestow ;  
Turn to Him, thy sin repenting,  
Sweet forgiveness shalt thou know.  
Linger not, nor seek for rest  
Save upon thy Father's breast :  
He is waiting.

Grieving soul, a Friend is seeking  
Of thy bitter cross a share :  
Let Him see thy desolation,  
Leave thy heavy burden there ;  
From its wood shall blossom grace  
In thy Jesus' sweet embrace :  
He is waiting.

Virgin Spouse, thy Lord is longing  
For the sweet Communion hour,  
When He nestles in thy bosom,  
Like a broken lily flower.  
Since He deigns to be consoled  
By His creature, Him enfold :  
He is waiting.

Priest of God, the Lamb is waiting  
For thy sacrificial word ;  
In that all-propitious moment  
Is the crowning grace conferred.  
Let that precious life-blood stream  
Countless souls anew redeem :  
He is waiting.

For the faithful, for the sinner,  
For the poor, the sick, the blind,  
'Tis the same great Wonder-Worker  
That the hills of Nazareth shrined.  
Silently He loves and prays,  
Through the weary nights and days :  
He is waiting.

## A EUCHARISTIC SOUL

As the first page of this book bears the name of Sister Mary Francis of the Blessed Sacrament, its last pages also may be dedicated to her memory. The following words were written immediately after her death.

A soul of the rarest worth and grace has passed away. The true-hearted Irishwoman who was known during her unworldly life in the world as the Hon. Mrs. O'Hagan, and during her religious life as Sister Mary Francis of the Blessed Sacrament, died on the 5th of November, 1909, in the Franciscan Convent of Reparation, Drumshambo, County Leitrim.

Frances O'Hagan was the daughter of Lord O'Hagan, the first Catholic who ever attained the dignity of Lord High Chancellor of Ireland. Her mother was a daughter of Charles Hamilton Teeling, author of a well-known "History of the

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Irish Rebellion," and brother of Bartholomew Teeling, Wolfe Tone's secretary. When she was seven years old, she was so seriously ill that her life was despaired of. Father William Molony, S.J., a holy and very retiring old priest whom few remember, suggested a novena to St. Aloysius, patron of the young. The novena was made with great fervour, and the child recovered. Long afterwards, when she told me of this gracious miracle of St. Aloysius, I retold the incident in a few simple lines, which may help to give some idea of what she had meanwhile become; for the prophetic words that are here placed on the lips of St. Aloysius were already abundantly fulfilled :—

O Aloysius, to my heart most dear  
Has ever been the music of your name—  
Dearer henceforward, since to-day I hear  
Of yet another most engaging claim,  
Which makes this grateful bosom thrill anew  
With joy that such a grace was sent through *you*.

A tiny maiden, seven sweet springtimes old,  
Was taking flight from this dark earth of ours.  
Ah ! had she gone, our earth more dark and cold  
Would since have been, more bleak, more bare of  
flowers.

But you, St. Aloysius, whispered : " Nay,  
The child must longer in her exile stay.

"The world has need of her. In years to come  
     The old will find in her fresh heart a store  
     Of filial piety ; a true man's home  
     Her love will bless, till angels hovering o'er  
     Will mark with wonder 'mid the world's light throng  
     Goodness and peace that to our heaven belong."

God yielded to our needs and to your prayer.  
     How many since have blessed Him for her sake !  
     Decrepit age revives beneath her care,  
     Young hearts from hers a purer sunshine take.  
     O Aloysius, only heaven will tell  
     The fruits of this your gracious miracle.

We need her still. Ah ! for a lengthened space  
     Keep her, kind saint ! from her bright heavenly  
     crown,  
     While every moment adds its meed of grace,  
     And every moment finds you looking down  
     With fonder love and more approving smile  
     On her you saved from early death erewhile.

The happy home that the young Saint foretold would in time owe its happiness to his little client was secured by her union with a "true man," worthy even of her. Though she already bore his surname, there was no tie of kinship between the two families. Her father, Thomas O'Hagan, was a native of Belfast ; her husband, John O'Hagan, was a native of Newry—both of them eminent lawyers, who attained seats in the High Court of Justice. The Lord

Chancellor's son-in-law, Judge O'Hagan, as the first judicial head of the Irish Land Commission, inaugurated that peaceful and beneficent revolution in Ireland which is still in progress. He never ceased to feel the ardent patriotism which, when he was hardly more than a boy, inspired those noble ballads, "Ourselves Alone," "Dear Land," and other poems that attracted much attention when they appeared in the historic *Nation* in its first fervour, and are still, after so many years, remembered.

Mrs. O'Hagan shared her husband's intense feelings on this subject, and on subjects even more sacred, with all the earnestness of her generous nature. I will venture to bring forward a very homely testimony borne by a kindred spirit. I met Lord Russell of Killowen coming one day from her table, where he and her father and husband and others had been discussing some of the burning questions of the day. His estimate of his hostess was expressed, I remember, in this emphatic phrase: "She's the best of them all." And this was the impression one carried away

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from every company in which she was—such were her noble qualities of heart and mind, her unaffected kindness, her brightness of disposition, her unselfishness, her transparent truth and sincerity, the mingled sweetness and strength of her character.

Allusion has been made to Mrs. O'Hagan's tender devotedness to the old, and her genial influence over the young. She was always nursing somebody, comforting somebody, doing good of some kind to somebody. One on whom her most affectionate care was lavished was the Rev. Dr. Russell, president of Maynooth College for the twenty-three years before 1880. During the last three of those years his health afforded opportunities which were seized upon with eagerness.

"Three patient years of painful rest,  
Ere yet the generous heart grew still.  
We wanted thee—but God knows best,  
And welcome be His Holy Will !  
He would thy meek endurance prove,  
And so He willed thee long to be  
The grateful object of that love  
Two kindred hearts poured out on thee :

Two faithful wedded hearts as pure,  
As rich, as noble as thy own—  
(He will remember you, be sure,  
Dear friends, before the great White Throne)."<sup>1</sup>

A friend, writing since Mrs. O'Hagan's death, says that she used often to speak of appearing before the great White Throne. But each soul appears there separately. Even those joined by the dearest and closest ties do not go together. Judge O'Hagan crowned a fervent Christian life by a holy and happy death in November 1890. Mrs. O'Hagan, in the first few years of her widowhood, devoted herself more entirely than was before possible to works of piety and charity. While she remained in the world, she certainly was not of the world.

Yet even this did not content her ardent soul. She felt herself called to sacrifice much that was sweet to nature, to live a life of closer union with God, and to shut out the world by an impassable barrier. Even when bent on becoming a religious, it might have seemed that she was, by her character and her

<sup>1</sup> "Idyls of Killowen," page 75.

talents, better fitted for one of the active institutes founded by her great countrywomen, Mary Aikenhead, or Frances Ball, or Catherine M'Auley; but no—she felt drawn to a very holy and secluded spot, more completely separated from even her own pious world, and from so many who loved and honoured her. She obeyed a vocation that imposed much greater sacrifices, and she made those sacrifices with cheerful courage that never faltered. Twelve years ago she entered the Franciscan Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Drumshambo, County Leitrim. It was already associated with another name which will always be dear to Irish hearts: the Mother Abbess is a grand-niece of Henry Grattan.

The great work of this community, its *raison d'être*—to use an expressive but untranslatable phrase—is, as its name implies, unceasing worship of Our Blessed Lord in His sacramental presence. Not only through all the hours of the day, but through all the hours also of the night, holy nuns are kneeling before this favoured shrine, joining their

prayers with those of the invisible angels who adore here under His Eucharistic disguise the *Deus absconditus*, *Deus salvator*. Every day from the morning Mass till Benediction in the afternoon, and then from Benediction through all the silent hours of the night, till the Mass next morning, the monstrance is enthroned on high above the tabernacle of this convent chapel, amidst flowers and lights, exhibiting the White Host to the loving adoration of His consecrated spouses. Daily Mass, daily Communion, daily Benediction, Perpetual Exposition, Perpetual Adoration, and perpetual prayer for all the wants of the Church, for all the interests of Jesus, for the conversion of all poor sinners. When the community is not assembled there together in their common exercises of devotion or chanting the Divine Office — they rise at midnight to sing Matins and Lauds — at least two are always in adoration before the altar, relieving each other at regular intervals.

Twelve years ago, Mrs. O'Hagan began her novitiate in this holy convent. Ever since then, till her happy

death, she edified all by her humility, her fervour, her punctual regularity, her prompt and cheerful obedience to every faintest indication of God's will; and there, as everywhere, she won the love of all hearts. On the 4th October 1898, she made her religious profession before the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, the Most Rev. Joseph Hoare, and became Sister Mary Francis of the Blessed Sacrament. She might thus seem to have retained her own name, as she had done at an earlier crisis which is usually marked by a change of name; but the patron of her religious life was not St. Frances of Rome, but St. Francis of Assisi.

Since that solemn and final consecration of herself to God's special service, every day increased her sanctity. Her humility, her joyful patience under privations which she must have felt, and under suffering and sickness which were not wanting, her spirit of prayer, her daily communions, and her constant union of heart with her Eucharistic Lord—what graces all this must have gained for herself, and what efficacy it

must have lent to the prayers that her affectionate heart poured out unceasingly for the friends and kinsfolk whom she had left in the world, and for whom her love was only intensified! A great grace bestowed on one of these was an abiding joy during her last years. Her prayers in Heaven will be more efficacious than ever to gain God's blessing for those whom she loved on earth and who remain behind her.

In the hope of benefiting some souls, I will mention a pious practice of hers that she once described to me. When receiving Holy Communion at Mass, the Sisters walk slowly from their places in the choir to the grating which separates them from the sanctuary, and they kneel one by one before the opening through which the priest administers the Blessed Sacrament. As Sister Mary Francis was the last of forty, this procession lasted for her several minutes, and these precious minutes she filled by repeating in her heart, as her last prayer before Communion, the sixteenth chapter of what used to be the fourth book of "The Imitation of Christ," but is now

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more properly called the third book. Some may learn from this saintly soul to make a similar use of this beautiful chapter, which tells us "that we ought to lay open our needs to Christ and crave His grace."

When one thinks of all that Frances O'Hagan sacrificed, of all that she did, of all that she was, it is hard to refrain from saying to her now, "Sister Mary Francis of the Blessed Sacrament, pray for me."

The other of the "two kindred hearts" referred to in these last pages deserves also to be commemorated in this eucharistic book, for he, too, was "a eucharistic soul." Judge O'Hagan had an extraordinarily vivid and tender devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. I could illustrate this by many of his words and deeds; but here I will do so only by ending with his version of the *Adoro Te Devote*, one of the best of the many translations that have been made of the best known among the eucharistic hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas.

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Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee,  
Truly present underneath these veils:  
All my heart subdues itself before Thee,  
Since it all before Thee faints and fails.

Not to sight, or taste, or touch be credit,  
Hearing only do we trust secure :  
I believe, for God the Son hath said it,  
Word of truth that ever shall endure.

On the Cross was veiled Thy Godhead's splendour,  
Here Thy manhood lieth hidden too ;  
Unto both alike my faith I render,  
And, as sued the contrite thief, I sue.

Though I look not on Thy wounds, with Thomas,  
Thee, my Lord, and Thee, my God, I call.  
Make me more and more believe Thy promise,  
Hope in Thee, and love Thee over all.

O memorial of my Saviour dying !  
Living Bread that givest life to man !  
May my soul, its life from Thee supplying,  
Taste Thy sweetness, as on earth it can.

Deign, O Jesus, Pelican of Heaven,  
Me, a sinner, in Thy Blood to lave,  
To a single drop of which is given  
All the world from all its sin to save.

Contemplating, Lord, Thy hidden Presence,  
Grant me what I thirst for and implore,  
In the revelation of Thine essence,  
To behold Thy glory evermore.

*Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum Sacramentum.*

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